

Jennie Cooper Walters

ACTING

By the same authors

THE PROCESS OF PLAY
PRODUCTION

*A Book for the Non-professional
Theatre Worker*



EDWIN BOOTH AS HAMLET

*From an original painting by John Pope in the Harvard
College Library*

ACTING

A Book for the Beginner

BY
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TO
R. C.
" who should
have written
this book

FOREWORD

Within this book is to be found a theory and practice of acting for the amateur actor.

The authors are well aware that no theory and practice of acting can be set down as absolute; indeed, perhaps every process would be met with strong objections from certain actors and directors. As there are many directors who have had to create plays with no guidance save their own intelligence, so there are many processes of production which have been found effective in achieving the desired results. As there are many actors, varying in attitude and characteristics, who have had to work out their own theory and practice, so there are many approaches to the task of preparing a part for the stage.

The justification for the process described in this book, is that it seems reasonable, it is applicable to most plays, it can be put into practice by amateurs, and it does lead to a presentation which is in harmony with the present day conception of acting.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY: THE AMATEUR ACTOR

(A) THE NEGLECT OF THE ACTOR RECRUIT

THE scenic artist may give us a glimpse of "magic casements opening on the foam of perilous seas in faery lands forlorn," the electrician may perform miracles of beauty before our widening eyes, the stage mechanic may arouse within our breasts the emotion of awe or wonder or terror, but the actor, after all else has been done, still remains the center of interest in the acted play. A deliberately emotionalizing color scheme, effective wind and sea machines, and expensive switchboards cannot compete for long with the stage spectacle of a young mother torn by anguish over the death of her first born.

Before stagecraft was ever dreamed of, thousands of years before scenery and stage lighting, centuries before the first dramatist appeared, the actor was, in a true sense, an important theatrical figure. He is the first of the theatre artists in point of time. He is at present one of the two pri-

mary artists of the theatre, sharing his honor and responsibility with the dramatist. And unless human nature undergoes some unforeseen, violent revolution in which the inanimate is raised to a position of interest and affection above that of man, the actor bids fair to continue in the rôle of central artist in the acted play.

A group of beginning amateurs clumsily putting together a production for their lenient school or college audience, a group of experienced non-professionals creating wisely a play for their discriminating little theatre audience, must, in every case, use actors. They *may* have intelligent directors and clever electricians and designers, but they *must* have actors. The other artists and workers are desirable, the actors are essential. Though the lighting be bad, the scenery shabby, and the costumes ill-fitting, the play will still be a success if the actors can act, if they are able to translate the printed words of the play into living symbols or living representations.

Even though this truth is simple to the point of absurdity, it needs to be emphasized; for the actor has been the most neglected figure in the modern amateur and non-professional theatre.

"In all that has been written about the new movement in the theatre, I find so much about the décor and lighting and so little about acting, that I am almost reduced to feeling that the actor has

no place in the revolution, or evolution if the term is a better one, that is undoubtedly taking place. And since it is upon the shoulders of the actor that the final burden has to be carried, I think it is now due him to find out just what his position is, or is going to be.”¹ So writes Claude King, the actor.

The actor, it seems, has been taken for granted—like the telephone in the box office—and no one has thought of him further than to see that he is on hand, ready for duty. The scenic artist can go to the library and find book after book relating to his work; he can discover much that is of service to him in the theory and practice of his art; he can find sketches and plates and photographs; and he can hear enthusiastic discussions of his work at drama conferences. So with the director, the playwright, the designer. All of the theatre workers, in fact, are able to find useable and often sound and valuable material on their crafts and arts,—all except the actor. With the exception of a few professional schools and experimental theatres, where can the beginning actor go for advice, study, and suggestions?

A well known journal of speech devotes a recent issue almost exclusively to drama. It would seem, since acting and speaking are related, that among all the articles, some space would be given to a discussion of the actor and his problems. Instead,

¹ From *Theatre Arts Monthly*.

color and lighting, production, direction, and play writing are discussed as though each was of first consideration to anyone interested in speech; and only one paragraph of one article is devoted to speech training through acting. This, we believe, is not an exceptional case. When one goes in search of material on acting, one generally fails in one's search. There are but few books on the theory of acting; and drama and speech journals give but little space either to its theory or its practice.

We might offer several hypotheses to account for the dearth of books on the theory of acting: that since everybody has some of the mimicry instinct, everybody thinks he knows about acting, and books, therefore, seem to be unnecessary; that only an actor is justified in writing a book on acting, and actors, for the most part, have never been noted for their literary ability; or that the art of acting, being magic, being composed of strangely elusive qualities, cannot be set forth satisfactorily in words. We shall not attempt to defend or disprove any of these hypotheses which seek to explain the reason for this scarcity of material; for the present we shall simply let stand the fact that there is very little material available.

There is likewise only a meagre amount of material on the craft of acting, the practical problems of the actor, be he amateur or professional. Books, however, are beginning to appear. Several

of real value have been published recently. These books have been helpful; they will undoubtedly be a stimulus for the writing and publication of other books. But in them the approach usually has been made through the eyes of the professional; the stage to which the actor is led is the professional stage of the commercial theatre. We have no argument with either the professional stage or the professional approach; but we would suggest that the amateur's viewpoint is different from that of the professional, and the equipment he usually brings to his task, his attitude, the conditions under which he works, the goal towards which he aspires, are different and should be considered by the author if the beginning amateur is to profit largely from a book on acting.

The amateur does have one source of information. In his own dramatic library, among those books dealing with the modern amateur theatre in the several phases of play production, there is generally a chapter on acting; in the various books on speech, a chapter is sometimes devoted to the work of the actor. But while these chapters may be sound and accurate, suggestive and stimulating, they are inevitably too brief to explain adequately the whole process of acting.

The amateur actor, we repeat, has been neglected. He has had too few sources available for his study and development. When he is assigned a

part in a play, he has either to rely upon his own instinct, augmented by his imagination and observation, or he has to be coached by the director who shows him where to stand, how to phrase and stress lines, how much or how little emotion to put into a speech. True, our neglect is not so complete now as it was a dozen years ago. As we grow tired of our newer theatrical toys, we turn our thoughts again to the actor. Undoubtedly he will receive an ever-increasing attention during the next decade.

Books will be written for and about the amateur actor, even though he can never find his greatest help in books. Perhaps his soundest training will be obtainable in the better theatre schools. Certainly he cannot learn to act by reading, or even memorizing, a book. Yet, this does not argue that a book on acting is necessarily valueless, any more than that a book on pencil sketching or clock repairing is valueless. Facts may be given concerning the craft of acting and points suggested about its art. Acting may be discussed in a manner which will affect the practice of the beginner. A book may lay before the beginner workable theories and useful practices; it may point out certain roads which have led to success and warn of others which have led to failure; it may present to the beginner an outline of the whole process of acting; and it may encourage those who are fitted and

discourage those who are unfitted for stage work.

This book purports to be written for the amateur actor and from his viewpoint. It looks upon the reader as a beginner, as a youth who is gifted with the acting instinct, who possesses the legitimate, perhaps egotistical, desires of the actor. Having informed him first concerning the good company he keeps as an amateur, it will then endeavor to encourage or discourage him through an exposition of the materials of acting and the mediums of expression which he does or does not possess. If it fails to discourage him, it will take him into the non-professional theatre where the stage, stage behavior, and various styles of acting will be explained to him. Then, theoretically, he will be assigned a part and, step by step, the process of taking this part and making it into a living reality on the night of the performance will be studied. The preparation of certain specific parts in modern drama will be analyzed and discussed. Then the actor will be introduced to his fellow workers in the theatre: to the director, the art director, his fellow actors,—and his relationship to them will be recommended. Lastly, certain intellectual, social, and theatrical backgrounds for the improvement of the actor's work will be discussed.

Let it be understood, however, that this book cannot make an actor out of anybody; and even

though the reader possess ability, the book will be of small service to him if he does not put into practice the principles and suggestions mentioned herein.

(B) THE AMATEUR AND THE PROFESSIONAL

The writer who has "arrived" frequently speaks with condescension to the teacher of composition and looks with pity or scorn upon the students who are endeavoring to express themselves in writing and who are doing it so clumsily. The successful, popular actor, more than the writer, has an arrogant attitude towards those who are taking their first faltering steps in his art, and gives but indifferent notice to the amateurs who are so eager and earnest and full of dreams, and who act so badly.

Both the writer and the actor are but human in their attitude, and they know from experience how many young people who think they can act or write can do neither. It is easy to find justification for the professional's behavior towards the beginner. Add to his experience and observation the lavish praise and publicity which he is accorded, and we have ample reason for his arrogance.

But the fact that there are successful professional actors does not argue that there may not be promising amateurs; certainly because the pro-

fessional stage is superior to that of the amateur is no argument against the amateur's right to act nor against a certain respect which is due him. The amateur need not hang his head because he is an amateur, scorned though he may be by those of the professional theatre. Let him remember that he has played an important part in the world theatre,—a part which, at times, is of greater importance than that played by his clever, imperious brother.

We should be sure that we are thinking about the same things when we talk about "amateur" and "professional." With a little help from the dictionary, we ought to have no trouble with the two terms. Webster defines an amateur as "one who is attached to, or cultivates a peculiar pursuit, study, or science, as music or painting, without pursuing it professionally." He says further concerning amateurism that it is "the cultivation of an art or study for amusement or personal gratification, as opposed to its professional pursuit."

The chief distinction we make, then, is that with the professional acting is a vocation, while with the amateur it is an avocation. The professional makes his living by acting, the amateur does not. There is nothing in the definition nor in the conception of amateur which suggests that his accomplishment need be inferior to that of

the professional. Practically, of course, the professional, who devotes his whole life to acting, has a much greater opportunity to study all phases of his art and to perfect himself technically; but the amateur has at least one advantage over the professional in the attitude with which he approaches the work of acting.

For the professional, acting is a business. Let us grant that he has been sincere, that he has been thorough in learning his business, and that he has become adept at it. Nevertheless, he earns his living through acting, and for him the play is not so much the thing as his job is the thing. He has to secure an acting job; he has to make good in his job. Though he must contribute towards making the play a success, this is not the end of his labors; he must do this in order to keep his job and move ahead in his profession. This is reasonable and natural. Usually it is satisfactory and does not mean that a play is going to suffer because he has to make a living by acting in it; but we must remember that the professional has to interest his public and his manager *in himself*; he has to use the play as a means towards the end of serving himself, and there is in his method a tendency towards routine and standardization.

His viewpoint is not the same as that of the

amateur. We must grant that the amateur is, in a majority of cases, a poorer actor than the professional, nevertheless, his attitude is the more desirable from the aspect of the unified acted play. For him the play can be, and often is, the thing. His spirit can remain more free; he can, if he so wishes, more easily adopt the attitude of the true creator, of the artist; he can be an experimenter, an adventurer to an extent to which the professional cannot afford to go because the professional's bread and butter depend upon his keeping himself in the limelight, in keeping his manager and public interested in *himself*.

We have to admit that we are talking more of theory than of practice. The amateur, in a majority of cases, is just as narrow, selfish, and standardized as the professional,—and without the professional's knowledge and mastery of technique. But theoretically his position is not to be condemned; and historically this amateur performer, while engaged in other occupations, has adopted the theatre art as an avocation and has benefited the theatre thereby; he has in several instances brought this art of the theatre to a high place without the help of the professional, and frequently before the professional actor has come into being to take acting over and claim it for his own.

(C) THE AMATEUR IN THEATRICAL HISTORY

Our thoughts travel back to the early civilizations of Europe and Asia, to the days of the very beginnings of the theatre arts. We find man experiencing sensations of joy because of his victories and of gratitude because of the beneficence of his gods; and in consequence we find man giving expression to his emotions, transforming his feelings into objectivity, bursting forth into spontaneous song and movement. In this "representation of feeling by physical action," in this expression of joy or gratitude or sorrow through the mediums of the spontaneous dance and later through a song and a simple pantomime, we find the beginnings of the theatre art.

In India, in Japan, in Greece and Rome, as we vision the first dramatic or semi-dramatic performances, we see the priests or warriors engaging in a crude sort of spontaneous dramatic expression. The mimicry instinct was present in these people and they found sufficient occasion for the expression of it. Having performed something dramatic (though they may have been unconscious of just what they were doing), the embryonic actors probably experienced something of the pleasure of acting and wanted to act again, while the onlookers, having found an interest in the performance, wanted to see it again. So, perhaps,

acting began; and from these beginnings it grew. True, throughout centuries it was closely associated with religion and the performance was a religious service; but through the Buddhistic moralities of the Hindus, the amateurs of India evolved a theatre art which made possible the writing and acting of such a comedy as *The Little Clay Cart* and of such a romantic piece as *Shakuntala*, through the Dionysian festival ceremonies the Greeks evolved the idea of drama which grew, through the repeated presentations of the amateurs, into the great tragedies; through the miracle plays of England the amateurs evolved the *Towneley Second Shepherds' Play*, a play which is in many respects a farce comedy of manners.

The actor preceded the poet. In each country he gave the poet or priest the idea for written drama and helped him mold it into a definite dramatic form. And the amateur actor held his position as interpreter long after the poet and his written drama came into being. The amateur persisted after Thespis in Greece, after Hans Sachs in Germany, after Udall in England,—and he persisted as an important, and usually a satisfactory, interpreter of the poets' experimental, often revolutionary, plays.

We look upon the great age of drama in Greece as that period which embraces the lives of Æschylus, Sophocles and Euripides; that is, roughly

throughout the fifth century B. C. Thespis introduced the actor as a distinct figure in the theatrical presentation, as a figure distinct from the chorus (which was, in a real sense, composed of actors). This introduction took place about 550 B. C. Plays were acted for nearly a century after this date, or well into the great period, before the actor became a professional. Playwrights, priests, and laymen, with whom acting was only an avocation, were responsible for presenting and interpreting some of the greatest plays of all time before the Athenian public.

Certainly a study of the evolution of drama in Greece shows us that there was an important amateur era during which drama grew from a spontaneous, formless outburst of emotion into a highly specialized and formalized art form.

The early amateurs among the Latins promised to repeat the story of the amateurs of Greece. Under their crude but enthusiastic efforts certain types of drama came into existence, notably the *satura*, the *atellana* and the *mime*. These entertainments were simple and coarse but they had a national stamp, they grew from the soil of the Latins. An important fact, however, is to be noted: they had become divorced from religion and the actors who acted in them were not held in high repute.

The later Latins, coming in contact with Greek

civilization and culture, beheld their own dramatic efforts as crude and undeveloped; instead of this discovery stirring the writers and actors to greater efforts, to original creative work of a higher order, it discouraged them; and we find the Romans adopting the Greek stage, Greek drama, and Greek professional actors.

The professional actor, however, did not appear at once, for we have the record of Livius Andronicus, one of the first of the Roman dramatists, [284 (?)–204 (?) B. C.], resorting to amateur performers in the persons of freedmen and slaves, for the interpretation of his adaptations. But the amateur era in Rome is not of great significance. During most of Rome's history her drama is in the hands of the professionals.

Five or six centuries after the fall of Rome and the disappearance of theatrical art, civilization began to show signs of a renaissance, and a new drama began a slow evolution through the Church, the religious brotherhoods, and the workingmen's guilds. The story of this evolution is so well known that we need do no more than mention it here. Briefly, throughout the countries of western Europe, and especially in France, Germany, and England, professional priests became amateur actors who acted out the stories and teachings of the Bible and the figures of the Church in order to make the truths of their religion more intel-

ligible and more impressive to their uneducated congregations. Then religious brotherhoods, whose actors still remained amateurs, presented Biblical and moral plays; and later either the guild amateurs or the general citizenry, under the direction of the civic authorities, produced the great miracle cycles in England and the lengthy mysteries in France.

If it were possible for us to examine the acting situation in England fifty years before the days of the great Elizabethans, we would probably find several professional groups and a number of flourishing amateur groups. About a century before this time, a professional class had come into existence,—a class largely recruited from the amateur guild actors,—who were content to live by what they made by acting: small companies of four or five who travelled about “upon the hard hoofe from village to village, for cheese and buttermilk,” acting out their interludes in the great halls, inn yards, and market places. But these professionals were not so important as the amateur groups. Among the amateurs there was to be found the group of folk actors who gave at certain seasons simple folk plays such as have come down to us in the Robin Hood Plays; there was a second group, probably tracing its source to the guild actors, which occasionally acted out farces and pantomimes; there

were the famous children companies, the Children of the Chapel, and the Children of St. Paul's; there were the mature amateurs of the Inns of Court to whom England owes the presentation of her first tragedy; and there was the group to be found in the schools,—the group which introduced the performance of the classics into English theatrical life, and for which such important comedies as *Ralph Roister Doister* and *Gammer Gurton's Needle* were written.

Now it goes without saying that these several groups represented several levels of ability and artistry. Some were perhaps very bad actors while others gave creditable performances. Though the abilities of some may have been justly burlesqued by Shakespeare in his immortal Bottom's crew and their amateur performance of "Pyramus and Thisbe" in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, others, judging from an occasional reference to their work and from the type of play which was written for them and acted by them, must have been able and skillful and trained to some degree in the craft of acting.

Though the professionals were present, it was largely through the persistent efforts of the amateurs that the great age of English drama came into being. As in Greece, the latter part of the great period was in the hands of the professionals; but the Elizabethan age found much of its im-

petus in the enthusiastic experimentation and enterprise of the amateurs.

Had we time we could trace something of the growth of this amateur era in Germany through the period of Hans Sachs, the Nürnberg shoemaker, who, it is recorded, organized a very creditable company of amateurs; we could discover that in Spain the amateur held sway until the appearance of Lope de Rueda with his troupe of professionals near the middle of the sixteenth century. In every instance we would find, just as we found in Greece and England, that the amateur actor was the first artist, the adventurer, the pioneer, who usually ushered in an important period of play writing. So, it is not upon airy imaginings but upon historical record that we acclaim the amateur an important factor in the development of drama.

Having paid him this tribute, let us now curb our praise as we recall that from the standpoint of the complete theatre art and the enjoyment of the public, a written play is not so important as an acted play; and let us remember that an acted play reaches its pinnacle of development, not in an age of great writers but of great actors. Under our professionals we have always had our periods of finest presentations. It is unreasonable to believe that the presentations in the time of Æschylus were as beautiful or impressive as those of a

century later when the actor's art was more fully developed; or that the presentation of *Hamlet* in 1602 was as effective and moving as its presentation has been many times since. The professional, with his native ability supplemented by years of training, with his technique and his finished acting, has been responsible for our golden ages in the theatre.

Before we pass on to a glance at the amateur in America, let us pause and see what calls into existence the actor and his craft, and ask ourselves what brings about a change from an amateur to a professional era.

Usually the first actors appear because a group, holding a strong group feeling, desires to express this feeling in some way. In the early days the emotions of religion and the emotions following a victory called for expression. We are informed that the acting instinct is, and has been, inherent in man. So, man has expressed in action his grief, his thanks, his triumph; or he has gone farther and has narrated simply but objectively, with some attempt at mimicry, his victory over an enemy tribe.

What brings about a change from an amateur to a professional era? A series of natural developments seems to be responsible for this. First, there is the slow change in the idea of what a play can be in content and in form. In the course of its

development it acquires form, it becomes freer, it embraces more subjects and expresses a greater number of emotions. Second, seeing a play is pleasant and creates the desire for seeing another; as more plays are desired, more are given; in consequence, a larger and larger amount of time is demanded of the actors. Third, the idea that the writing or acting of a play can be a profession, that since time and money go into a production, and that the spectator should, in turn, be willing to pay for his pleasure in the theatre the same as he pays for any other pleasure or experience of life, is an idea which develops naturally as plays grow in interest and significance. So, in the early days there was a change in attitude and a change in the form and content of plays; there was an increasing demand; and gradually the work of giving plays grew until a man could give much of his time to acting and could request a wage (from the state or the theatre public) for his work; and when this time arrived, the amateur became a professional.

(D) THE AMATEUR IN AMERICA

Here in the United States we are in the midst of a widespread amateur development, with all its attendant enthusiasm, experimentation, and blundering. One point is readily seen: our present

era does not correspond to those eras about which we have been talking, and we cannot draw any significant conclusions concerning the present through a study of the past. Our present era has not developed in ignorance of theatre tradition, it has not evolved with a forming civilization, its source is not to be found in a desire for religious or patriotic expression, and it has not grown up in the absence of the professional theatre.

Almost the reverse of the conditions surrounding the growth of the earlier amateur eras is true. We had in the United States a highly organized, commercialized professional theatre which was sufficient to supply a dramatic fare to the entire country. The professional theatre and the professional actor had followed close upon the heels of the pioneer, until every city and every frontier settlement had its hall or opera house which frequently entertained troupes of travelling actors who gave satisfactory presentations of classic and contemporary drama. But this situation changed, the companies disappeared, the halls and theatres were put to other uses.

Because of the law that decay follows growth, that death follows life, the civilizations of Greece and Rome decayed, carrying with them the decay of the theatre; but in the United States we have witnessed the decline of the professional theatre without any apparent decay of our civilization.

We must not give the impression that this decay of professional drama was universal. Metropolitan drama continued in a flourishing condition; and in our theatre centers we may still find good plays, fine acting, and excellent productions. But the cities and towns beyond the theatre centers were deprived of the legitimate, professional drama.

A number of reasons are given for this decline of the road companies. We read that the country began to be given fewer and fewer plays; that the plays were often badly acted; that they were frequently trite, theatrical, badly written, and were out of touch with the life of the audience; that the actors were unskilled, third-rate performers who were not artists but laborers trying to make a more or less honest living. This would seem to represent a changed policy, and would lay the blame largely to the short-sightedness of the managers.

But we also read that an economic situation is largely responsible for this changed condition. An economic transformation brought higher wages, higher production costs, higher transportation charges. The number of road companies had to be cut down. Cheaper actors had to be employed. Eventually, town after town found itself deprived of the theatrical attractions to which it had been accustomed.

Simultaneous with this disastrous economic change, the motion picture industry developed. Pictures were shown in the halls and theatres instead of the plays of former years. This new industry was able, for a time, to fill the place left vacant by the road company, to supply the community with some sort of theatrical entertainment.

We shall not attempt to decide just what was responsible for this change and decay. We shall only point out that the change came, and that the motion picture was destined, for a time, to take the place of the play. But the motion picture did not completely satisfy for long; the desire for legitimate drama remained in many hearts. The situation grew less and less satisfactory until, under the stimulus of the experimental and art theatre movements of Europe, the amateur directors, artists, and actors engaged in an effort to supply that which had once been supplied by the professional companies. The idea grew, the adventure became popular. Community, civic, experimental, church, school theatres came into being, and thousands of amateurs began to act before hundreds of thousands of their friends and fellow townsmen.

This amateur era is nearing the close of the second decade of its activity. As we pointed out, an amateur era is not at first concerned with acting but with the play. In the United States our interest has been both in the play and in its ef-

fective staging. We are now reaching a point where our eyes are being directed towards acting and its improvement. We have a growing library of amateur drama, we have developed staging to a place of artistry and effectiveness, but our acting has not developed consistently with its sister theatre arts. Amateurs have grown in numbers but not greatly in skill. We have numerous plays which call for skillful acting. We grow ambitious and desire to produce these plays. So, for one reason and another, our attention is being turned once more to the actor.

Our amateurs have proved themselves worthy of attention. They are inheritors of the determination and enthusiasm of the earlier amateurs of Greece and England. They have done acceptable work, considering their inadequate training and direction. They have toiled on patiently and frequently with intelligence. They are deserving of any help we may offer them.

What, we may ask, of the amateur's future? There is for him, here in this country, a promising future on the professional stage, provided, of course, he possesses the ability and grit to fight his way onto this stage.

Some writers argue that the amateur era will evolve into a professional era, such as happened in other days in other countries; that as the amateur now supplies a small demand, so he must make

ready to supply a larger and larger demand, until his avocation of acting will some day become his vocation. It is a question whether we have enough evidence at present to warrant such a prediction. The school and community theatres are not yet filling a place large enough to demand all of their actors' time and service. It may be that they never will. It may be that the professional theatre will find a new way to bring drama to the thousands of communities which it is now neglecting.

The amateur has a future, and an important immediate future, in his own non-professional theatre. The amateur era is not over. He can still supply, in a small but significant way, some of the theatre demands of his friends and townspeople. His pleasure and the pleasure of his audience will be greater as he becomes a more accomplished actor.

We need not look forward to his development into a professional at this time. If we dread to think of him as a professional, we need not be pessimistic or fearful. We can look towards a near future and vision a period of finer theatrical productivity and better acting when our present age shall have reached its high point.

CHAPTER II

THE ACTOR CANDIDATE: HIS NATURAL GIFTS AND CULTIVATED MEDIUMS OF EXPRESSION

(A) ACTING

WHAT is acting? It is of very little value to the actor candidate to attempt to define acting in the abstract, to reduce it to the language of the theorist or the terms of the art critic. The man or woman desiring to go on the stage and wishing to gain a clear conception of the task before him, cannot find help in a general definition. Let him not try. What he can do is find out some things concerning the fundamentals of this elusive task; what will help him is seeing things in the concrete and not in the abstract.

Certainly acting is not imitation, for imitation is not only something artificial, it is something without power and without depth. Acting is more than recitation, no matter how beautiful and moving is the flow of language in the recitation. It is something more than gesture and posture, no matter how graceful or powerful or rhythmic are

the movements and lines of the body. It is something more than behaving naturally. On the other hand, behaving unnaturally does not give us acting. It is something more than mere deception, for deception can never become art. It is more than illusion, more than simply living the externals of the life of the character which is being portrayed.

The actor is a translator; but as the book translator, if he be wise, does not give us a literal word-by-word translation of the story, so the actor does not seek to give us a literal translation of the playwright's words. The actor may seem to do this; but if his acting is to possess power and give pleasure, it must suggest rather than render literally. It must have a deeper appeal than the visual and the auditory.

The actor re-presents, but in doing so, he passes the character through his own personality: he expresses it through his own person, and brings to us a living being who stirs our imagination. Acting, then, embraces more than the use of our mentality and our moving bodies, it includes more than an expression of emotion and a display of our vocal powers. Acting, in a last analysis, does become something magic which science cannot dissect. Something takes place within the actor which cannot be seen, cannot be analyzed, and therefore cannot be described. Words become flesh, but they become more than flesh; they become a suggestive,

living personality which holds communion with our own spirit.

As beginners, it is both unnecessary and futile to puzzle over the soul of acting, for we will have great difficulty in discovering it,—if, indeed, we ever discover it at all. It is futile for us to try to understand the art of acting, for we cannot analyze the art of acting, we cannot reduce it to language save only as we can express certain vague ideas in abstract statements which leave us almost as completely in the dark as we were before. About all we can do is grant that the great actor possesses a heavenly gift which defies our most careful research into his nature; that all good actors possess a bit of this gift which is apparent in their work, which we feel when they are on the stage, even though we cannot tell just what it is or how they use it.

However, if it is futile to puzzle over the soul of acting, we should not dismiss from our minds the idea that some phases of the process of acting can be studied. For besides this great gift, the actor is in possession of a number of other natural gifts,—gifts of body and of spirit, which are not shared by all men. These we may talk about. They are more material, more concrete. They can be trained and put to service upon the stage. They are the mediums through which the actor trans-

lates, re-presents, suggests, and touches our imagination.

As we begin to talk about these mediums and their operation, we leave the art of acting and become concerned with its craft. It is necessary that the actor candidate recognize that acting is a craft as well as an art; it is wise for him to confine most of his attention to the craft. The art of acting cannot be taught, cannot be learned. It is pure gift which cannot consciously be acquired either on the stage or in the school room. It is a divine by-product of the actor's nature and his several abilities.

Even if the art of acting is elusive, much may be learned about its craft. The beginning painter learns something about the mediums with which he is going to work: color pigments, canvas, and brushes; and he learns something of the laws of composition, of perspective, of the principles of design. So the beginning actor should know something about his mediums and study the methods for using these mediums to the best advantage.

In the actor's case the mediums are to be found within himself. We shall begin with a self-examination to determine whether or not we possess, or may acquire, the mediums which are essential to acting.

(B) THE ACTOR'S MEDIUMS

It is not to be presumed that every person who wants to act can master the craft of acting, any more than it is reasonable to believe that every person who wants to write poetry can write poetry, or everyone who wants to play football can become a football player. Certain materials in the composition of the actor are essential, and the beginner who has the desire to act will determine, in justice to himself, whether he possesses these materials. He may have bravado, ambition, self-confidence; he may be an exhibitionist and love to put on grease paint, but these are not the important things; he may even have a sincere love for the theatre, but this is not enough; he should make sure that he possesses the necessary mediums of expression before he lays his plans to become an actor.

Even if he finds that he possesses these mediums, it does not follow inevitably that he is destined to become a great, or even an acceptable actor; but it does mean that he is justified in undertaking the work in which he is interested. If, on the other hand, he finds himself deficient, he would be unwise to pursue his dream farther.

We might reduce the actor's materials which become his mediums of expression to three: a normal physical person, an attractive personality,

and more than the average man's share of the mimetic faculty. For the beginner, however, it may be clearer if we subdivide these and suggest one or two others which are of service to him as an actor.

There are certain physical requirements made of the actor. If he is deficient physically, he is almost sure to fail. He must, then, have a normal body and a good voice. Before he can become an acceptable actor, both body and voice must be naturally normal and responsive, or must be developed, trained, and brought under control. Body and voice can be made responsive through intelligent effort. The important thing at first is that they shall be normal.

The director is occasionally puzzled or embarrassed because of the physical shortcomings of an actor. Perhaps the actor is stiff and stubborn in appearance when on the stage. The director may feel that this condition is largely psychological and may set out to break it down, only to discover, after many efforts have failed, that the actor's difficulty is wholly muscular; that he is, in a slight degree, deformed, and cannot appear other than stiff and stubborn.

This, perhaps, represents an exceptional condition. More common instances are found in people who are very short or very tall and thin, in people who are too fat, or who have a short leg

or a withered arm. These people should not try to act. The actor's body is one of his mediums of expression; and he uses his mediums, not in private as does the poet or the painter, but in public before the eyes of his audience.

Much that we have just said may be applied to the voice. Appearance, of course, does not apply in this case, but construction and articulation do. The construction of the organs of speech is as important a factor as bodily construction, which is external and visible. The speech apparatus must be normal.

The beginner need not despair immediately if he finds that he does not possess a good voice. Fortunately, only a small percentage of bad voices is due to faulty construction in the speech apparatus, but rather to some such cause as bad placement, poor or wrong training, carelessness or nervousness.

However, if the candidate does find upon examination that he has a physical defect in his speech apparatus,—that his occlusion is abnormal or his palate cleft,—then his condition becomes a matter for serious attention. If, on the other hand, he finds that his voice is high, not because of any abnormal construction of his vocal cords but because of nervousness or habit, resulting from an earlier nervous condition; if his voice is thin and high because he is using chest instead of abdominal

breathing; if he "talks through his nose" because he is not using his resonating cavities; or if any condition prevails which can be remedied through attention and training, then he can, with optimism, continue his self-examination, holding, however, a determination to acquire a good speaking voice as soon as possible.

As we think for a moment about personality, let us remember that it is not something simple and visible, and that an actor cannot give to a character qualities which are to be found nowhere within his own makeup. He cannot give warmth or spirituality to a character if his own nature is totally lacking in these qualities.

Later on in the book we may have something to say concerning the merging or submerging of the actor's personality into the personality of the character he is creating, and we shall insist that in some cases the actor himself must not be seen by the audience. But personality, in such an instance, refers to the actor's characteristic traits rather than to a certain characteristic attraction which he has.

Some people are not interesting to watch or to have around us, others are repulsive or cold or condescending. It must be realized that even though an actor is engaged in portraying an evil or a revolting character, there should be established, in almost every case, a unit of sympathy or

at least a bond of confidential understanding between the actor and his audience. In other words, the actor should have some qualities of charm and of magnetism in his personality, and he should be able to project these qualities across the foot-lights.

There must be a personal attraction to which the audience responds. A novelist does not have to possess a charm of person, a sculptor may be boorish, a composer drab and colorless, and the relation of each to his public need not be affected thereby; but an actor, even in a high school play, who radiates no warmth and "heart," who has no charm, who does not create some bond of sympathy or interest between himself and his audience, will not be popular with his audience.

It is soon apparent that a self analysis which reveals to the candidate whether or not he can project charm and magnetism, is very difficult. If he is extremely intelligent and is honest with himself, he will be able to discover, in some way, whether the audience does or does not like him; if he is sensitive (and he should be sensitive), he will be made aware of his shortcomings; and if he is unable to find out by himself, he should be brave enough to ask his director, or someone else in whom he has confidence, and insist upon an answer to his question.

In mentioning the actor's sensitiveness, we sug-

gest another quality which is necessary in the actor. Just as the mechanic has the knack of handling tools and putting things together, as the painter has the gift for handling brushes and painting a picture, so the actor has a certain faculty for acting. This faculty, which consists of the use of a certain sense which is inherent in him, will be discussed fully later on. At this point we would do no more than suggest that the actor, as he walks on to the stage, should ask himself whether the stage "does something" to him and whether he behaves differently just because he is on the stage; he should further examine himself as to whether he possesses the mimetic sense and a responsiveness to character; and he should examine himself as to whether the audience, either real or imaginary, affects his playing. The actor should be affected in three ways: by the physical stage, by the character he is portraying, and by the audience before whom he is playing. He has then, at least three instincts or senses. These we may group together and designate the theatrical sense. This theatrical sense, embracing a sensitiveness to the stage, the character, and the audience, is the possession of every true actor.

The beginner need not have all of these senses strongly developed. In some experienced actors one sense is frequently much more pronounced than the others. We can imagine a good actor whose

work is clear cut and effective, yet who possesses little or none of the stage sense, for example. But the candidate should be fairly certain that he is in possession of some of this theatrical sensitiveness. It will be a necessary part of his acting equipment.

A quality which we are apt to overlook is imagination. A discussion of imagination could be prolonged unreasonably. Here we would do no more than indicate that the literal minded, phlegmatic performer, the man of placid spirit who sees no more than his own lines and who does no more than his director tells him to do, is usually a bad actor. At least, he is an uncomfortable actor with whom to work. The actor with imagination will, first of all, enjoy acting more because he has more capacity for enjoyment and because he can live more vividly and completely in his characterization. He will be able to see the character in numerous situations other than those in the play, and he will be able to hold interesting, illuminating conversations with his character. He will be able to fill out his part, to enrich it, to add details, making it full and convincing and complete. Lastly, he will be able to work by himself and need not be dependent upon the suggestions of his coach for every phrasing and every movement.

It is reasonably certain that imagination cannot be created in a person who is barren of it; but

it is reasonable to believe that imagination can be developed, that it can grow if the seed is there for growth. Imagination may be composed of the same material whether it is in the possession of the architect, the actor, or the mechanical engineer; but the actor puts his imagination to work in his own way in his own field. He gives it freedom on the problems of characterization and stage movement. Through repeated use and under intelligent direction, the imagination becomes more fertile and reliable. Eventually the actor grows more proficient and becomes a joy to his director rather than a bore.

These qualities which we have mentioned as serving the actor as mediums of expression—a normal body, a good voice, personality, the theatrical sense, and imagination—are inherent in him. They are the natural mediums through which he creates his character. One other quality (and this may be acquired) should be added to the actor's equipment: the ability to work hard.

Acting is not easy. Acting frequently demands physical endurance, mental concentration, expenditure of emotional, and especially of nervous, energy. An actor more than once draws near to a state of complete exhaustion. The candidate who approaches the task of acting holding the belief that it is a pleasant game, an easy pastime, will be greatly surprised. The task of reliving five,

ten, or even twenty years of emotional life in two hours, and living it so that the cumulation of the years' pain or joy is visible to an audience, is not a simple, certainly not a light, task. And this is not the only example which could be cited of the hard work to be found in acting. The actor must possess determination, perseverance, willingness; he must agree to work hard in order to create a character, in order to enter convincingly into the emotion of a scene, in order to build up the dramatic climaxes of the scenes and acts. He must, then, know at the outset that he is going to work hard; and knowing this, he must be willing to offer every ounce of physical and nervous energy he possesses in order that he may meet the demands of the play.

We could name other qualities and mediums which will serve the actor in good stead. Perhaps we have omitted some which are of importance. But the actor, as he contemplates setting out upon his long road, can, we believe, make his decision if he has his attention called to these six; and if he has a normal body, a voice which is not defective, an ability to project a personality, a theatrical sense, imagination, and the willingness to work hard, he may be said to have passed his entrance examination with a very high grade. In all probability he is not certain of his mediums of expression, he is not sure concerning his ability to use effectively

those mediums which he possesses. In any case, he had better pass to a consideration of the development and training of the mediums before he undertakes any definite work on the stage.

(C) THE BODY AND VISIBLE ACTING

Despite all our interest in bodily education, we have fallen far short of acquiring a normal physical development. With a normal, unrestricted body and a normal, free apparatus of speech, such expression as acting calls for could be given with but little effort on our part. We know from experience, however, that effort is required, and that even with effort we sometimes fail. Since our bodies and voices, which are such important mediums of expression, are restricted and undeveloped, we must spend some time on them before we are ready to undertake the work of acting.

As we begin the subject of the training of the body, we would first direct attention to the kind of body we need for our work. It should be an instrument which has its vital organs in their normal positions and well and properly supported, which has adequate muscular development, and which is healthy and alive. The first step is not training in a limited sense, not control, but the development of a body which is worthy of training and control.

It is not our function to prescribe a system of physical education. One can obtain a strong, healthy body in a number of ways. The boy on the farm obtains it unconsciously as he rides, plows, and does the chores around the farm. The city boy, in his athletic activities in high school and college, obtains it as a by-product of his interest in sports. Others may adopt a system of exercises designed to build up the muscles, nerves, and vital centers. In every case the development of bodily strength and health is not a matter of intensive work over a few days or weeks; it is a matter of countless repetition over a long period of time; it is the adoption of a way of living. And even when the physical body has been brought to a condition in which it is strong, healthy, and beautiful, it will begin to deteriorate with neglect.

This is not saying anything new; but it is saying something which needs to be repeated and repeated with emphasis because of the number of young men and women desiring to act who offer as their physical instrument of expression hollow chests and flabby muscles, who are not pleasant physical specimens to look at, who cannot use their bodies effectively because they have so little to use. So, it is necessary once more to call attention to the obvious but neglected fact that an actor's body is something which an audience looks at. The actor acts with his body: with his head,

his back, his arms, hands, legs, and feet. The body is an important translator and interpreter of thought and emotion on the modern stage. One of the highest and most fascinating forms of acting, namely, pantomime, utilizes solely the actor's body as its objective medium of expression. The well-developed body is essential.

The actor can put to use certain utilitarian and æsthetic bodily qualities which are not necessary to the athlete; for, we would repeat, the actor's body presents something to be looked at. The strong, healthy body usually possesses some of these qualities; but if the actor does not have them, he should give some attention to acquiring them.

There is, for example, the quality of poise. Poise is not an effeminate quality. It is not a substitute for something more important which the actor lacks. Poise suggests physical power; it gives the possessor the appearance of self-mastery. Poise is something strong, not weak. The actor who possesses it is attractive because there is nothing rigid or unbalanced in his physical appearance. In acting, poise becomes definitely utilitarian while it has an æsthetic function as well. Awkwardness, weakness, lack of self-command are not beautiful and produce in the onlooker no pleasant sensation such as the well-poised body produces.

The physical culturists inform us that that which is healthy is more frequently beautiful than

that which is unhealthy. Beauty and health go together. We may likewise discover an affinity between the artistic and the beautiful. That which is artistic is more frequently beautiful than ugly; ugliness and art do not easily mate.

The sincere actor wants, some day, to become an artist. The artist-actor expresses his art through his personality, his voice, his body. A beautiful body is not necessary to acceptable, or even to great acting; but a beautiful body may be one of the actor's resources of artistic expression. Let it be remembered that a beautiful body means neither a weak effeminate body nor does it mean a useless body. The Greeks cultivated the body for its beauty, but it would be absurd to suggest that their bodies were not strong and useful as well. Beauty may be of the masculine gender as well as of the feminine.

Grace is related to beauty. It is an attribute of beauty. It is an attractiveness, a charm which is evident in the posture and movement of the body. It is "an easy and natural elegance." Strange as it may seem upon first thought, the graceful body can suggest clumsiness and lack of grace in a more pleasing and satisfactory manner than the ungraceful body can express them. Only the experienced actor knows how often grace is desirable in his stage movements.

Poise, power, self-command, grace, beauty,—

these are bodily attributes which the actor will find useful, which he will find valuable to him in his compound problem of expression.

We are speaking both to the girl and the boy, the woman and the man in the matter of these bodily qualities. Women are deficient in them as well as men. If a director were to take a group of a dozen young women and put them through a number of exercises to test their bodily control, poise, command, and grace, he would be likely to find fifty per cent, if not a larger number, deficient. If there is doubt concerning this statement, let the director request each of a group of girls to walk across the stage in the character of a queen. It may be a revelation to the group, as well as to the director, to find how few can walk with the poise and command which we associate with the regality of a queen.

Now the inability to express through the body the poise and command of a queen may be traced to one of two sources: the body itself may not possess these qualities, or the person may not be able to put the qualities she possesses to effective use. If the first is the case, if the body itself is deficient, then we can do no better than recommend that the actor begin some sort of physical education such as fencing, dancing, and certain gymnastic exercises. For many years these have been recommended and have been found effective.

We shall not endeavor to prescribe any particular system of gymnastics or any special course in dancing. But because we say no more about physical education, it is not to be taken that it is of little importance; it is simply because it is outside the range of this book.

If the second condition prevails, we may be of some little help; and as we begin this discussion, we become concerned with the concrete subject of visible acting.

Two things can and should be done with the body which is ready, physically, to be put to the work of acting. The body should be trained to more effective expression, and it should be made an instrument of expression for the mind and spirit of the character which is being portrayed. We shall discuss these in the order named.

The qualities or attributes which we have mentioned tend to make the bodily expression effective. A body which is effective in its expression is dramatic in itself, apart from any expression of character which it may give. The actor, then, should move and gesticulate in an effective way.

Every actor is called upon to walk. Sarah Bernhardt once declared that the wrong idea animates people in walking; that our thought is fixed on the objective, and in consequence we thrust our heads forward and follow our heads. She suggested in order that our walking be more beautiful and

effective, that we pretend there is a fragrant, buoyant breeze at our backs, blowing against our shoulders; and with this in mind, that we seem to lean against the breeze and allow ourselves to be propelled forward.

Most amateurs, when they sit in a chair, sit far forward with their shoulders against the back of the chair. Instead of this, let the actor sit upright with his hips, not his shoulders, touching the back of the chair, and with his feet firmly upon the floor. He will find that by sitting in this position he can control any nervousness more easily, he has freed the entire upper portion of the body for expression, and he is in a position which permits him to rise without taking one or more intermediary positions. His body has been made more effective.

This matter of effectiveness is largely a matter of knowing how. Ask a boy to walk across the stage and kneel before a king, and he will walk, bend his waist, bend his knee, and duck his head. The movement does not flow, it has no grace or beauty or effectiveness. There is no harmony between the thing to be done and its bodily expression. What we should have here is not a series of movements but one continuous movement which is the expression of an idea.

What we need, then, is a harmony between the different parts of the body in expressing the idea.

Such an harmonious articulation of parts, such a flow of graceful movement, can be seen in a flower drooping in the heat. The blossom inclines, and there is a letting go along the whole stem, which results in a graceful, curved movement. If we can see this flower reviving under the stimulus of a cool breeze and dew, we find the process reversed; there is a slow, flowing uplift along the whole stem. There is a harmony of parts, a flow of movement, always present in nature; this same harmony and flow are present in the human body when it is freed of all restrictions.

To express an idea such as is suggested in the drooping flower or bowing before the king, we must have a body which is free from all mannerisms and habits that prevent expression. Also, the idea which is to be expressed must be clear. For example, the idea, let us say, is that of a young nobleman advancing, under romantic circumstances, to the feet of his sovereign. The idea reaches the imagination and the imagination, which is not confined to the mind, is set free for its expression throughout the entire body from the sole of the foot to the top of the head. The movement, then, expresses, not the idea of a boy of the twentieth century walking across the stage and bending here and there, but the idea of romantic youth, made visual through an effective movement.

The question of making the body an instrument of effective expression is not so difficult for the actor who possesses a good body if he first uses his mind and then his imagination on the task before him.

We have been thinking of expression which is not closely related to a particular character and to particular emotions; we have been thinking of the expression as dramatic within itself. We shall now consider the abnormal, specific expression of the body when the actor is portraying a character.

The body should be made a channel of expression for all the varying mental and emotional ideas and experiences of the character to be portrayed.

A woman, let us say, is warped in spirit and blunted in mind. She is a poor, pitiful clod. Now the author has given the dialogue in which these characteristics are expressed and the actress, with these characteristics in mind, has made up her face and adopted a certain voice. But she has also a channel of expression in her body. The way the head seems to hang upon the neck, the position of the arms, the heavy, lifeless attitude of the hands, the position of the feet as she stands, the slow, heavy way in which she walks, the break of the body in the pelvic region,—these are all expressions of the mind and spirit of the character.

After all, the mind and spirit are the important human characteristics in drama, and of these the

spirit is the more important. It is not Nora's body in which we are interested, but her soul; it is not *Œdipus'* physique, nor Hamlet's, nor even the Hairy Ape's, but in each case it is the soul. How frequently do we find an amateur's body which is incapable of expressing the mind and spirit of his character! How often does the body misrepresent the mind and spirit! The mind is tired and worn and discouraged but the body is active and young; the spirit is in agony but the body is enjoying itself to the full. The body is either dumb, or it speaks a language which is at variance with that of the spirit.

A college dramatic teacher said recently: "I once heard a professional director say to a cast, 'Hold your heads up. You're playing comedy.' In those days I was young and much concerned over art without knowing what art is, and this remark struck me as dishonest and a piece of stage trickery. Since that day I have learned better. I know now that the remark was based on a psychophysical law."

An actor may, and usually does, use his natural gifts instinctively, without conscious effort. So, when an actor is given the character of an old man to portray, he does not consult a book or chart and discover that a character aged sixty, male, has shoulders stooped, arms limp, knees bent, toes out, etc.; from observation, imagination, and in-

instinct he knows the old man, feels his character, and as he endeavors to create this personality for the stage, he instinctively, unconsciously adjusts his body and its movements so that they are harmonious with the character. His instinct is fairly reliable, his mind is a trustworthy master; and his body will tend to respond to the mental and emotional characteristics of the character.

Nevertheless, the coördination of mind and body is not always clear to the beginner. He wants to play comedy or portray an old miser, but his body hinders him instead of helping him. He cannot speak the language of the body. Without any attempt to discuss the subject fully, we would call attention to several facts and examples in this relationship between mind and body and speech.

The mind is not confined to the brain; and when a thought is to be expressed, both the voice and the body assist in the expression. An emotion is not confined to the inner parts of the body; an emotion affects both voice and the externalities of body and is expressed through them. We have, therefore, this two-fold medium of expression: voice and body. We find the voice and body reacting to thought and emotions. We may say that there are certain natural bodily and vocal reactions to certain thoughts and emotions.

For example, the emotion of laughter tends to raise the head and thrust out the chin, and so

we find the admonition of the professional director, previously referred to, is justified; if an entire cast is made to go through a scene with heads high and chins out, a definite impression of good-humor and fun is communicated to an audience. Determination, bravery, pride draw the body to an erect position and raise the chest. Mental depression finds its expression in a relaxed body, in drooping shoulders and lifeless arms and hands. Defiance tenses the body, surrender relaxes it; optimism straightens the body, pessimism droops it.

We discover, as we continue our investigation, that intelligence and mental activity have a definite relationship to the body in its positions and movements. Let us look at this relationship in respect to the position of the feet. In general, the lower the intelligence and the less active the mind, the wider the base upon which the person stands. Compare, for example, the position of the feet of a child just beginning to walk with that of an adult; of that of an habitual drunkard with that of a philosopher. The person of low intelligence seeks as wide a base as possible; as the intelligence increases, the width of the base decreases.

We note also a definite relationship between vocal and bodily expression. A monotonous voice and a passive face go together, and both are the

expression of an inactive mind or a dulled spirit. A grouch has certain vocal characteristics and a certain facial and bodily expression which are in accord with his spirit. An active, young mind suggests an erect, alive body and a clear, vigorous voice. An awkward mind suggests an awkward body and a corresponding vocal defect.

These few suggestions may bring nothing new to many who read them; but to the beginner they may reveal a path of study which will lead to a more harmonious development of his instruments of expression.

The language of the body is not concerned with the expression of the mental and emotional nature alone; it also definitely expresses the age of the character and his physical background and environment. It would seem needless to mention this obvious fact were it not that young actors endeavor to portray old people with erect, well-articulated bodies, and convalescents with the vigorous physiques of athletes. Sedentary work stoops the shoulders; sickness slows up bodily action; age breaks the body of a woman across the pelvic region and breaks a man across the shoulders and chest; a life on the sea spreads the legs apart and gives the sailor "a rolling gait." As with much of the actor's study, the study of the physical expression of age and background is to

be found in real life; observation will reward him with much that he can put to good use on the stage.

Such suggestions as we have given indicate that there is a language of the body, a language which is not as clear and complete in its expression as it should be; that there is a technique of bodily movement just as there is a technique in the expression of the painter's art or the poet's; that there are natural sources for bodily movement.

The amateur actor should begin to put his body to the task of expressing the mind and spirit. There is a generally recognized method in every science and art: concentration upon a few points at a time and constant repetition until point after point becomes conscious accomplishment and passes on into unconscious accomplishment. This method must be applied to the task we are considering. In this instance it requires first an understanding of the various bodily postures and movements which represent mental and emotional conditions. It requires experimentation and conscious, intelligent repetition to make the body express what is asked of it. We have referred before to the belief that the body tends to follow the suggestion of the mind or spirit; but remember the body cannot follow easily if it is stiff, awkward, restricted; and since acting is largely make-believe, the body cannot express adequately the

make-believe of the mind or spirit without intelligent understanding and conscious effort.

This section has touched upon many matters and the total effect may be as much of confusion as of enlightenment. Let us say in summary and conclusion: the actor needs a good body; this body should have grace, poise, beauty, and self-command; it should be exercised to make it an instrument for more effective expression; and it should be studied in relation to mind and spirit in order to become a better instrument of expression for the mind and spirit of the character the actor is portraying.

If the beginning actor is blessed with a body which is capable of expressing without effort the common gestures and movements, let him not rest satisfied with what he has; let him recognize that he has an opportunity for cultivating the language of his body in the directions of power and subtlety, of raising his bodily expression to a plane of equality with his vocal expression.

(D) THE VOICE AND AUDIBLE ACTING

It would perhaps be impossible for us to find any discussion of the actor's mediums of expression which did not devote much space to the factor of the voice. Two popular books on the actor's art, written thirty or more years ago, are upon

the desk before the present writer. In one the discussion of voice occupies a majority of the pages, while in the other, the entire contents is devoted to voice and elocution. Even today, when voice is not so all important as formerly, writers upon the actor's art still see fit to stress it and urge its importance.

The perfect control of a beautiful voice is perhaps the greatest asset the actor, even today when visual acting is so significant, can have in his possession. In conveying thought, in evoking beauty, in expressing and arousing emotion, in presenting character, in doing almost everything that the actor has to do, the voice plays its part. If music is the most ideal of the arts, then it is through the voice that the actor brings an element of the ideal into the theatre. Throughout thousands of years the voice has proved to be the actor's most popular and most perfect medium of expression.

Every actor has a voice of some kind, but not every actor possesses a voice which is an asset, which is equal in histrionic value to his other powers. Many an actor has a bad voice which limits his power of expression.

Since voice and speech touch the process of acting at so many points, we shall spend some time upon them in a later chapter. Such subjects as interpretation, speech rhythms and tunes, and dialect will not be mentioned here. We shall do no

more than get our vocal apparatus ready for the work of acting at this time.

No prospective actor should attempt the development of his voice unaided, if it is possible to secure the aid of a voice expert. Many dangers beset the self-taught in the field of voice. We cannot overstress the value of professional guidance in this matter. For those who cannot secure the help of a good teacher, we can recommend no safer course than a study of voice production in relation to the sounds of the English language. In this study the actor can find much help in any good text on phonetics.

In order to have an intelligent understanding of voice production, let us consider the voice mechanism and its operation in speech.

The voice machine consists of the larynx in which are the vocal cords, the pharynx, the large chamber above the larynx and just back of the mouth, the mouth, hard and soft palate, tongue, teeth, lips, and certain resonating chambers in the head and face. This, briefly, is the mechanism. When a current of air (breath released in exhalation) is passed over the tensed vocal cords, the initial tone in voice production is made. This sound may be high or low of pitch depending upon the shortness or length of the vocal cords, though high pitch usually is due to nervous tension in the speech areas. What happens after the pro-

duction of the initial sound is the important concern of the speaker. But before we turn our attention to the reinforcement of tone, let us examine the process of breathing, the act which is necessary to the production of the original tone.

Breathing is performed normally by most individuals. Normal breathing consists of inhalation: the intake of air through the nose into the lungs, and exhalation: the expelling of air through the nose. During speech the air may be inhaled through the mouth and expelled through the mouth. During speech we are especially concerned with exhalation. In order to control the stream of air passing over the vocal cords,—to the end that all breath escaping may be converted into tone,—we must control exhalation. Husky or breathy voices are caused by the escape of breath which has not been vocalized. They can be corrected by controlled exhalation.

Exhalation can be directed successfully in but one way: by an effort of the abdominal muscles which control the diaphragm. The student should inhale with the thought of depressing the diaphragm and extending the ribs in the region of the diaphragm, and exhale by a slow relaxation of these muscles. This is the normal way to breathe.

The actor's task is not finished when he discovers that he breathes normally. He should take daily exercises until he has strengthened his ab-

dominal muscles and established, with certainty, his breath control.

With an understanding of correct breathing in its relation to breath control, let us now imagine a stream of air passing over the vocal cords, a stream so small that all the breath can be converted into tone.

We are now ready to consider what happens to this tone after it leaves the vocal cords. This tone is small and without color, quality, or character. Therefore, that which distinguishes good voices from bad happens after the air has passed over the vocal cords. In other words, good voice depends largely upon the reinforcement of the original tone.

The actor's problem is first one of getting out of the way and permitting the tone perfect freedom in seeking resonance. The second problem, that of modifying this pure tone in the production of the various sounds of the language, is one of making correct changes in the positions of the organs of speech, particularly the tongue, lips, and soft palate, without interfering with the freedom of the tone as it seeks resonance.

This getting out of the way is not so simple as it sounds, and the difficulties can best be understood by an examination of the muscles controlling the speech areas. We find that, simply classified, these muscles fall into two divisions: the muscles

involved in the act of swallowing, and the muscles directly affecting tone production. Remembering that speech is created out of breath, we can readily see that the muscles involved in the act of swallowing are directly opposed to the act of speech. The muscular act of swallowing completely closes the trachea. Any least action on the part of the swallowing muscles interferes with good tone. Now when we realize further that the other set of muscles, those controlling tone production, are involuntary, we begin to apprehend some of the difficulties attendant upon voice production. When we will to make tone, we are wont to feel that we must do something muscularly. The muscular response we are likely to get is from a set of muscles directly opposed to our purpose. So the actor's first problem narrows itself to an effort to keep the swallowing muscles inactive during speech. Failure to keep these muscles inactive results in the preliminary growl found in some voices when certain sounds are made. This noise is designated as "stroke of the glottis."

In order to combat the impulse to use the swallowing muscles during speech, we must learn to relax these muscles. This necessitates the practice of such exercises as yawning, sighing, prolonged breathing of the sound "h," and necessitates bodily response to the oft-given commands: "Let go! Relax!"

When the actor depresses the diaphragm and extends the sides during inhalation, and when he can exhale steadily and easily in making the sound "ha" so that all breath is vocalized and so that there is no tension of the swallowing muscles, he is ready to consider his second problem: the modification of this tone in the making of the sounds of his language. The sounds of the English language are divided into three classes: the vowels, the consonants, and the diphthongs, the last being sounds composed of two vowel sounds. The sounds are designated "open" and "closed or interfering" sounds. These phrases are descriptive of the positions of the speech organs in relation to the open condition we have just mentioned.

We should begin the practice of making vowel sounds with as much relaxed openness as is possible for us. Openness of throat may be gained by dropping the lower jaw as if for yawning and then sounding "h"; openness of the mouth at the place of departure of sound may be gained by rounding the lips and lifting them away from the teeth in a slightly flared manner. If we do these things, we have certain of our speech organs in good position to begin the making of all the vowel sounds.

The actor has three aids within himself for identifying true sounds; he can study himself in a mirror, he can listen to his own voice, and he can try to identify by sense of feeling the correct

positions for the various sounds. Watching and listening to others will also help. Watching aids him in associating the correct position with the correct sound; listening develops the good ear so imperative to the self-taught.

There is no place in this book for a detailed discussion of how to produce the various sounds of the language, but some general remarks can be made.

Vowels are made by tongue positions which only slightly interrupt the condition of openness earlier described. Vowels, as we have said, give color, quality, and character to speech and even may suggest the meaning of words if intelligently manipulated. Neglect of good tone production in relation to vowel sounds results in more bad voices than all other causes combined.

What has been said of tone production in relation to vowels applies equally to diphthongs. The chief difficulty in making diphthongs arises from a blurring or confusing of the two tongue positions in making the two sounds instead of a definite taking of each position. Perhaps the most generally abused diphthong is "ou" or "ow." This sound analyzed becomes "ä" plus "öö." If the position for "ä" is taken and the sound made, then the position is relaxed and the position for "öö" taken and this sound made, and if this procedure is repeated more rapidly and the sound of

“t” is added, the speaker will find that he has spoken the word *out* more clearly and fully than he is in the habit of speaking it.

Let us now consider the consonants, the closed or interfering sounds. As the word “interfering” suggests, consonants are made by forcing the breath stream, sometimes vocalized and sometimes not vocalized, against obstructions formed by the joining of certain of the organs of speech. “H” is the one exception to this rule. It is made by a non-obstructed, unvocalized breath. Most of the consonants are of little value in creating beauty of speech, chiefly because they are not resonating sounds. The notable exceptions are “m,” “n,” and “ng” and to some extent “l.”

Consonants must be rightly produced; the right position for each consonant must be precisely and deftly taken. The position should be taken with as complete an approximation of the open condition as the character of the sound will permit. Further than this little can be done to make consonants helpful in creating better and more beautiful speech.

As we have said, “m” and “n” are exceptions to the general rule. These are vibrating, music-making sounds though they are definitely closed sounds. In this case the interference sends the sounds through the opening into the nose and they find reinforcement in the head and face. These

sounds can be prolonged. When this is done, a humming results. Much beauty is added to the speech of the actor who can make his "m's," "n's," and "ng's," vibrate with a singing quality.

Valuable as "m" and "n" are with their music-making head resonance, they often lead careless speakers into the "nasal twang." This nasality should be avoided. It is most marked on such words as *man*, *time*, *song*, where the position for "m" or "n" tends to influence the true position for the accompanying vowel. This fault can be corrected by attention to the positions necessary for the production of each sound.

As an exercise for the correction of nasality, we would recommend that the speaker take the position for "m," hum the sound, and release it completely; then drop the jaw, take the position for "ă," sound it clearly; then take the position for "n," hum the sound, and release it. Repeat this slowly, clearly, definitely. The speaker may continue with the words *time*, *song*, and other combinations.

We would emphasize what we said at the beginning of this section, that an actor should not set out to develop his own voice if he can secure the guidance of a good teacher. No writer, no matter how learned or experienced he is, can take the place of a teacher.

The actor's first vocal business is the production

of good tone and the accurate making of the language sounds. He should also examine his voice for certain qualities which are required in stage work. Of these qualities, we would call attention to range, variety, beauty, and power.

The necessity for a voice which possesses range is easy to grasp. During a performance an actor is sometimes on the stage for two hours, or even longer. He may have several hundred, perhaps as many as four hundred, speeches to deliver. If his range is limited, his voice will probably grow fatigued; more than this, his voice will become monotonous to his audience. Louis Calvert in his *Problems of the Actor* (a book to which we will refer several times) suggests that an actor should be able to speak in about two octaves.

Range depends to a great extent upon temperament. An unemotional, phlegmatic, practical minded individual usually possesses a voice of limited range. The emotional person shows greater range. Range increases as the individual grows in emotional capacity, as he comes to know the heights and depths of life.

Most voices have the possibilities for sufficient range. Occasionally a person has vocal cords above the normal in length, in which case a high range is impossible; or the cords are short and prevent the acquisition of the lower range. But, as we know, most vocal cords are of normal length, and

tones can be developed both up and down from the normal pitch. Needless to say, the development of range, as in other voice matters, depends somewhat upon the ear.

Variety in voice is also essential to the actor. Variety is necessary for the same reason that range is necessary: to prevent fatigue and monotony. Also, the actor is called upon to speak in the voice of many characters, and each character has his own unique voice. One voice is harsh, another soft; or the voice is thin or nasal or musical or squeaky. A complete characterization includes a voice which will suggest the character. Surely the task of characterization includes the use of a voice capable of variety in tone, range, and quality.

Variety is consciously achieved only through a clear understanding of the process of tone production. A good mimic may unconsciously give to his voice the necessary variety; but if he has a trained voice which is well controlled, and if he understands his voice, he can consciously direct it and give it the variety he needs. If he has acquired a good, normal voice, the chances are that this voice will respond to any reasonable abnormal demands. If his study has been thorough, he can listen to another voice and can understand what is happening, physically, to the speaker in order

to produce such a voice; and knowing this, he may be able, with some degree of success, to reproduce this voice within himself.

A voice should likewise be capable of some power. We do not mean that the voice must be always loud or that it must possess a thundering force, but we do mean that the voice should be above the average in loudness and vitality because of the greater distances to which an actor's voice must carry in the theatre; especially do we mean a voice capable of the strength and vital force which are frequently necessary in the emotional climaxes.

When we discuss power we eventually get back to a discussion of the development of the muscles through breathing. As the diver reaches the end of the spring board, he acquires, by a physical "push" the power to project his body through the proper curve so that it will strike the water at the desired angle; so the speaker gets the power for his utterance by a push on the diaphragm. In this manner he can create a tone of power. Sustained power depends upon the ability to control the muscles of the sides and the diaphragm.

Lastly, we would call attention to beauty as a desirable vocal quality. A beautiful voice possesses those qualities which we have mentioned, and, in addition, clarity and resonance. While not essen-

tial, this vocal quality is a fine asset to the actor. It will add to his own pleasure in acting and to the pleasure of his audience.

Beauty in voice may be said to include also the adoption of a specific tone quality to the emotion to be expressed. For instance, the voice will tend to take on the quality of beauty if, when the emotion of sorrow is expressed, a voice appropriate to that emotion is used; if, when the emotion of anger is expressed, a voice appropriate to that feeling is employed. The beautiful stage voice harmonizes the emotion and the tone quality.

When the actor can produce pure tone and the true values of the sounds of his language, when he has added to his voice certain necessary or agreeable qualities, then he is usually ready to put his voice to actual stage work. Before he does this, however, we would warn him in regard to pronunciation.

Good pronunciation is dependent upon the ability to enunciate and articulate correctly. We have given some directions for enunciation, which means a clear, full utterance of the vowel sounds; we have made suggestions for improving articulation, which means the correct joining of the organs of speech in producing consonant sounds; and we urge that the prospective actor supplement our brief discussion with an intensive study of some good text on phonetics. (Daggett's *The Spoken* *)

Word, Daniel Jones's An English Pronouncing Dictionary.)

Correct enunciation and articulation do not insure good pronunciation. We cannot reduce the question of pronunciation to formula and rule. A word properly pronounced has a certain accent, certain vowel and consonant sounds in a certain order, has an absence of super-accuracy, and perhaps an omission of one or more sounds because the letters are silent. We have no infallible rules in our language for accent and none for vowel and consonant sounds and silent letters; at least we have no rules which do not admit of a great number of exceptions. Furthermore, as Mosher points out: "In our spelling most of the sounds of the language are represented in a variety of ways . . . the sound of long 'e' is represented in twelve different ways (mete, beet, beat, receive, people, key, Cæsar, machine, quay, Phœnix, Portuguese)." In the matter of pronunciation, the search for rules becomes futile.

Yet, correct pronunciation is desirable. What, then, can we say which will aid the actor in acquiring it? We can make no more than very simple suggestions. Certainly the speaker should not be indifferent and careless (which most of us are); and having adopted a more respectful attitude towards the question, he should use such means as are available for the correction and improvement

of his pronunciation. Among these are the pronunciation of good speakers, the authority of the dictionary, and experts in the field of phonetics.

We have just begun to touch upon the voice as a medium of expression of the actor: we have hardly mentioned the voice in its definite rôle as sole medium of expression in audible acting. Since we shall have occasion to say much about speech in another connection, we will summarize here only what we have talked about in this section. Speech is a most important medium of expression: good speech depends upon the production of good tone; the actor's voice should possess range, variety, beauty, and power: and the actor should give some thought to enunciation, articulation, and pronunciation.

(E) THE THEATRICAL SENSE

In one of the little theatres in the Middle West, a laundry boy had been in the habit of appearing in the back of the auditorium during rehearsals and remaining until the rehearsal period was over. One day the director asked him if he would be willing to help "back stage" during the next bill of plays. He consented, and was present at dress rehearsal for instructions.

On the opening night the director became conscious of a personality on the stage which he had

not felt before. He looked around and discovered that it was the laundry boy. Unobtrusively but with assurance he was managing the scenic end of the stage. He was sensitive, alert, certain; and a feeling of relief was in the heart of the director, though he could not quite explain why it was there or how it had come.

When the curtain rose, the laundry boy did not leave the stage nor did he watch the actors. He stood in the wings intent upon the audience, listening to them, concentrating upon their reactions to the play.

The director, encouraged by what he had seen and felt, cast his new stage hand for the part of Burgess in Shaw's *Candida*; and on the day after the play opened, the boy was receiving congratulations at the back doors as he went about his work of gathering laundry.

Let us look at another instance. There were two college girls, two amateurs who had the desire to act. One was pretty, with a good figure, a soft voice, an attractive personality; the other was a little too tall and angular, was silent, and if she possessed any talent, she seemed incapable of ever marketing it. Not one director in a dozen would have given a part to the second girl in preference to the first.

But a surprising transformation took place when the two girls appeared on the stage. They

seemed to exchange personalities! The first was unable to project any of her attractiveness beyond the footlights; she was phlegmatic, uninteresting, and the audience did not respond to her. The second girl was an entirely new creature. As she walked onto the stage she seemed to take on a vivacity and self-command which had been absent before; she was tremendously alive in her characterization and more than one member of the audience spoke of the charm and vividness with which she played; she was sensitive to her audience,—she so wanted to do for them what they expected of her that her mind became uncommonly keen; she was so sensitive, so “on edge” during her playing that more than once she was near exhaustion when she left the stage.

What we are trying to bring to mind through these illustrations is the presence in some people of a theatrical sense; the possession by some actors of a gift which all performers do not have. We could use both of these illustrations in an exposition of personality, for both the boy and the second girl possessed this interesting gift; but we will not touch upon personality just yet; we would let these illustrations call to mind this inherent something which affects the actor’s mind and nerves and senses when he works in a play; this change which comes over him within the theatre,

bringing him alertness and power, and at the same time, apprehension and humility.

This something is not connected with the voice or body; it is neither personality nor technique; it is a keen sensitiveness which tends to put him in a proper affinity with the make-believe conditions of his stage, with the character he is portraying, and with the audience before whom he is playing.

As we attempt to discuss this theatrical sense, we discover that it is not a simple sense, a unit indivisible; we find that it is a sense made up of different senses, each highly or imperfectly developed, each varying in degree and in kind with different individuals. As we make our subdivisions let us remember, however, that each subdivision is not clearly outlined and that the function and operation of each overlap.

The first of the subdivisions of the theatrical sense which we discover is what is generally known as the mimicry sense. The mimicry sense itself may be subdivided into the imitative sense, or the faculty to imitate the voice and behavior of other people, to "be like" other people, and the character sense, or the faculty of becoming sensitive to both the externals and the internals of the dramatist's character, of identifying oneself with this character. The sense of imitation is fairly universal and is not of so great importance on the modern stage;

the sense of character is rarer and is of vital importance.

The whole being of the person possessing the character sense will be affected by the character he is endeavoring to portray. As he works with the character, this sense becomes active. It torments him through its insistence upon a mental, spiritual, and physical change in the actor. It discourages him as it urges the creation of a new personality through his own personality and his imperfect powers of expression. It is the cause of conferences and private rehearsals with the director. And it inspires him as it leads him into the new character.

It is apparent that if the actor's body and voice are not trained and under control, he will have difficulty in doing what the character sense prompts him to do, even though the sense is well developed. In any case, his character sense will struggle with him for days, perhaps weeks, annoying him, inspiring him, urging him to continue his task.

This sense, as suggested, is much stronger in some actors than in others. Some actors, upon a single reading of the play, will begin to breathe the very breath of the individual character they are going to portray; others must read the play many times, must study the character, think about it, work with it, before the character sense will prove strong enough to dominate their own indi-

viduality. Some people have a sense for a type character but not for an individual character. They can suggest an old woman, a political boss, a bashful lover, but all their own women, bosses, or lovers are very much alike. The beginning actor who possesses this much of the sense should be grateful for it. This limited sense is useful.

Modern drama makes the character sense imperative. The modern actor is sensitive to character. He responds to it. As we shall later point out, the very center of interest in our realistic plays is character.

A second division of the theatrical sense may be designated the stage sense. It is the sense which becomes operative when the actor walks onto the stage. A stage is not a living-room or a kitchen or a street, and the movements about a stage are not just the same as the movements made in actual rooms or along actual streets in actual life. The stage is a place of illusion, it is something artificial. Certain conventions and laws are operative on the stage which are not operative in ordinary life. The stage has a visual appeal and a dramatic significance which life does not ordinarily possess; in consequence, the movement of the actors, their positions, their place in the harmony and balance of the stage picture, are of importance.

The actor whose stage sense is developed, will behave in obedience to those conventions and laws

of the stage which make the illusion clear, the movement interesting, the dramatic significance more outstanding. The stage will influence his behavior just as the character influences his behavior. As a sensitive traveller, visiting a foreign country, will unconsciously adapt himself to the customs and conventions of that country, so the actor, leaving the world of actuality and entering through the stage door a world of make-believe, will instinctively behave in obedience to the laws and customs of the stage.

The director soon discovers whether or not the actor has a stage sense. The actor who possesses it will be sensitive to groupings, to his position in reference to the other actors, to his position in reference to the scenery and properties; he will be sensitive to the greater perspective of the theatre, to the greater scale which calls for a shift from reality to the illusion of reality; he will be sensitive to his responsibility during those scenes in which he has little or nothing to do and say. It is usually found that an actor who has a well developed stage sense has a good imagination and an artist's feeling for composition.

A third division yields us the audience sense, that is, a sensitiveness to human beings, real or imaginary, who are seated in the auditorium. We frequently hear the statement that an actor "feels" his audience. Every actor who is worthy of the

name feels his audience; he cannot help it; but feeling a real audience and being sensitive to one which is imaginary, are not quite the same thing. The first requires only a passive sensitiveness, a faculty of receptivity; the second is active, aggressive. An actor may feel an audience yet not respond to it, not satisfy and please it in a theatrical way; but the actor with the audience instinct is sensitive to his audience even during the first days of rehearsals when the auditorium is empty, and responds to this imagined audience as though it were a baton in the hands of an orchestra leader.

Let us try to make the operation of this audience sense clear. A play is made up of speeches and movements and of pauses in speeches and movements. At one time a speech should follow immediately after a preceding one, while at another time a slight pause should elapse between the speeches; now a movement should begin at once and should be hurried and merged into other movements, while again a movement should be delayed or should be retarded and come to a halt. In music, a note sustained for a certain duration is most beautiful and effective. In acting a tone or movement sustained for a certain length of time is likewise most effective. The time sense helps determine the length of the tone or pause; but the length of the pause, the slowness or rapidity of the speech, is also dependent upon the mental and emotional

interest of the audience. An audience which is losing interest or growing restless will need to have speech follow speech in rapid succession in order to regain their attention; an audience sitting tense and breathless will get more pleasure out of a pause held for several seconds than out of a pause held for one second. Now the actor, as he rehearses his play and thinks of its pace and intensity, is conscious of the response he believes the play is arousing in his imaginary audience, and of what they desire at any particular moment; and he governs his acting by the ever changing condition of the audience he has in mind.

The actor, then, is in two places at once! He is on the stage speaking and acting his part; and in his imagination he is in the auditorium listening to and watching the play.

The audience, be it real or imagined, responds emotionally; and for its particular state of emotion there is a psychological moment which is right for a speech or a bit of action; there is a tempo at which the movement should proceed if the audience is to be completely satisfied. The actor with an audience sense plays, even in rehearsals, with these points in mind, realizing however, that his judgment may be wrong and that his tempo and intensity may have to be readjusted when the audience is actually present.

A much simpler instance of the operation or

non-operation of the audience sense is found when amateurs play comedy. The actor who has this sense developed will "wait for the laugh" and will begin his next speech at just the right time; the actor without this sense will disregard his audience and will hurry on seemingly unconscious of the necessary pause which the laughter demands.

A scholarly analyst could perhaps, through an intricate analysis, determine various laws which apply to the emotionalizing of audiences, and could catalogue the desires of audiences under various degrees and kinds of emotions. Perhaps there are "right" psychological moments which can be classified and catalogued. But the actor does not need knowledge of this sort. Because he is sensitive to an audience, he will hear his audiences saying: "Hurry— Hold the pause— Tighten up the scene— Relax— Play stronger." The actor *feels* that his audience is liking the play or not liking it; he also *senses* the emotional condition of the audience on individual speeches and movements, and this sensitiveness determines, to some extent, how and when the speech and movement shall be made.

There is a temptation to mention other senses which appear to be a part of this general theatrical sense. The time sense is closely related to the audience sense. Both it and the rhythm sense could be discussed in this place. But further subdivision will lead to greater complexity; and these senses

can be discussed as advantageously in another connection.

Perhaps we have already been too detailed and analytical in this matter, for after all, this theatrical sense, embracing the three senses we have named, is a heavenly gift to the actor. He does not need explanation and analysis before he can use it. He does not have to make a conscious study of his character sense or his stage sense or his sensitiveness to an audience. Yet, it may be that he feels himself lacking in one or another of these senses; or it may be that they are latent and undeveloped in him. In such cases, what can be said which will be of help to him? In respect to the possibility of its cultivation, let us take up each sense separately.

We have been told repeatedly that a mimicry sense is possessed by the great majority of the human race. Certainly most children can play at "make-believe," and not a few show signs of a rudimentary character sense. But as a child grows, he uses this sense less and less and it becomes inactive or dies; so by the time he becomes a man, the sense has often disappeared. It is reasonable to believe that if the development is begun early enough, or if the sense has been kept alive throughout childhood and youth, the mimicry sense can be cultivated in most people. Just how much, depends upon the individual.

How far the development of an imitative sense

will lead to the growth of a character sense, is a question. Certainly the two are related. We find reason to believe that from a sense which prompts the portrayal of outstanding external characteristics of a person, there may grow a sensitiveness to both the external and internal characteristics of the author's character. This much we can say with certainty: if there is no imitative sense present, there is no hope of developing a character sense.

The lack of a stage sense is not so much a matter for pessimism. The stage is *the stage* and is not reality; it is an artificial, changing thing, and its customs and laws are not permanent. We can conceive of a man who, though inherently an actor, finds himself at a loss the first time he appears on a stage. He does not respond to the stage because he is puzzled over what to respond to. What, for instance, would an actor of the time of Sophocles do if he were suddenly set down upon a twentieth century stage? He would probably be confused at first, but after a time he would adapt his stage sense to the new conditions. So the present day inexperienced actor, if he is truly an actor, will develop his stage sense as he becomes acquainted with the stage and its customs. The stage sense can be cultivated more easily than the other two senses. We would suggest an active imagination as one important requirement for the development of this sense.

When we come to the audience sense, we reach something which, we feel, either is or is not inherent. It is almost impossible to believe that one can develop an audience sense if he cannot imagine an audience before him and if, imagining it, he has no responsiveness to it. If this sense is latent, however, experience will develop it. Constant appearances before audiences, analysis and realization of the desires of the audience, continued response to the emotionalized state of the real audience, will sharpen this sense, and will, in time, make it dependable.

(F) PERSONALITY AND IMAGINATION

We have spoken of personality several times. Here we wish to suggest its outstanding qualities and emphasize its usefulness.

We have all known or read about actors whose popularity was due almost entirely to personality. It may be that they had little or no knowledge of technique, that they were ignorant of the very rudiments of acting; but a winning personality captivated their audiences and they were able to retain a stage popularity for years. The exploitation of personality is not acting, and when it becomes the sole stock in trade it should be frowned upon by lovers of the art of acting. Nevertheless,

the power of personality should not be underrated by the beginner. He will find in it another medium which will be of use to him in his work.

By stage personality we do not mean those qualities which make a person unique, which set him off from all other people; neither do we mean certain outstanding but disagreeable qualities of individuality; we have reference to a charm and magnetism which the actor displays. Through his charm he gives us a sense of pleasure that we are unwilling to miss, and through his magnetism we feel ourselves in contact with an impelling, influencing force which makes us want more of it.

Interesting things are being written about personality. Whether it is "a transcendental entity of some kind which can be recognized rather than directly cultivated," or whether it is "an unusual combination of quite understandable qualities," or only a "certain robustness and radiant physical health," we do not venture to say. But we do know that personality, especially the magnetism of the actor's personality, is a power by means of which he can hold his audience; and all actors know that there are many times when they need this power. Neither will we say that personality can be cultivated, despite the many luring advertisements promising rich returns from personality courses; but we can say that if the actor possesses it (and

he should possess some of it) he should bless the gods for their beneficence and he should cherish it as a rare and valuable treasure.

More important than personality is imagination. If there were one thing and only one which we were permitted to mention beyond the cultivation of the physical gifts it would be: cultivate the imagination.

As a part of a tryout held by a college dramatic club, the candidates were given a simple problem in pantomime. Each was asked to imagine himself a thief who has gotten into society and who, having left a party below stairs, enters a room and finds, in the second drawer of a dressing table, a string of pearls. He takes these and escapes with them just as someone enters the room.

Most of the candidates proceeded with the business as outlined by the director. They went through the movements of listening at the door, tip-toeing across the room (with frequent backward and sideward glances), discovering the pearls in the second drawer, holding them up, smiling, turning the head quickly, thrusting the pearls into the pocket, and hurrying off the stage.

But one candidate roused the lethargic committee on tryouts into animated interest. He entered cautiously and almost came to disaster by bumping into an imaginary chair. When he had recovered, he proceeded with even greater caution

towards the dressing table. There he discovered a dead cigar. (The dressing table was an old property table and the cigar had been left from a previous performance.) He examined it and made sure that it had not been lighted recently. Having satisfied himself on this point, he proceeded with the search. He found several articles of interest on the table. Then, going through the action of opening the drawers with his pocket knife, he discovered the pearls. He spent no time in smiling over them. He looked at them intently for a moment and thrust them into his pocket. Suddenly he heard a noise of someone approaching. For a second he was at a loss; but he saw an imaginary light button, pressed it, and escaped in the darkness.

It is quite evident that the last candidate used something which the others did not use. The others saw a door, a table, a drawer, a string of pearls,—those things which the director told them to see. He saw a completely furnished room and he found many things in the room which the others did not find. Nothing escaped his notice; even the cigar butt was put to excellent dramatic use by him. The outcome of his performance was that the members of the committee were unanimously agreed upon accepting him; and the candidate, though it must be admitted that he was an able pantomimist, roused the committee's interest largely through the use of his imagination.

Imagination is needful in stage work. How can the man or woman who does not use imagination develop into a good actor? How can he see the character, for must not the character live in the imagination before it can live on the stage? In the imagination the actor must first find his character, get acquainted with him, live with him, listen to him talk and see him move about; in the imagination his character is visualized and developed.

The author cannot tell us everything about a character; the stage directions are not complete; many reactions to other characters are not explained; and there are minutes when the character is on the stage with no word from the author as to how he is to behave. How can the actor fill out his stage business? How can he occupy these minutes if he does not use his imagination? Shall he be dependent upon his director for every move, every gesture, every inflection? If so, he soon becomes a burden to his director.

The imagination takes its cue from the playwright's dialogue and directions and fills out the rest. The imagination makes the character complete and alive and interesting and not a puppet moving about when told to move, and speaking lines when he hears a cue word. The actor's imagination should be the great limitless source from which he constantly draws during the days when

he is creating character and perfecting stage business.

If a beginning actor has no imagination, nothing much can be done about it, and he must enter the vocation or avocation of acting under a severe handicap. But most beginners have some imagination, otherwise they would not want to be actors. Their duty to themselves, to their directors, to their fellow players and to their audience is to cultivate the imagination. Many of them do not know how to use the imagination, for the cultivation and use of the imagination are not among the prescribed subjects in our schools. But it is present in most people, ready for use, awaiting only encouragement and exercise. The beginning actor usually has to be told that he has an imagination and then has to be urged to give it freedom. Frequently he has to be urged many times. But if he is willing to trust it, he usually finds that it is at his service. If the other candidates in the tryout mentioned above had witnessed the performance of the last candidate, several could have gone back on the stage and seen imaginary chairs, bed, and numerous objects on the dressing table. Imagination may operate slowly and conventionally at first, but it will develop with use.

Let the actor set his imagination to work on character in the plays he reads; let him ask it to

supply for him a scene in the character's boyhood, the scene in which the character graduated from high school, the one in which he got his first job, lost his best friend, stole his first watch, took his first drink! The imagination may be backward in responding, but with coaxing and repetition, it will give the actor something helpful.

The use of the imagination can be cultivated; it should be cultivated by the actor; and he cannot begin on this cultivation too soon.

CHAPTER III

PRELIMINARY ADVICE TO THE SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE

(A) STYLES OF ACTING

As the beginning actor, having discovered that he possesses sufficient equipment for acting is given passport into the theatre, he will profit by becoming acquainted with three other matters, namely: the styles of acting and the method applicable to the style which he will use, the elementary principles of stage behavior applicable to this style of acting, and stage and drama terminology.

Acting is not of one kind. We discover a number of kinds or styles of acting, each owing its period of popularity to a general state of culture and a specific mood of the public, or to peculiar stage conditions, or to both.

It will not be worth our while to attempt an outline of the types of acting or to dwell at length upon various outstanding types; but a brief examination of some of the styles may lead us away from the notion that the kind of acting which is in vogue today is the right and only kind, and that

all others are passé or inferior ; and this knowledge should be of benefit to us.

A style of acting very unlike our own was popular during the nineteenth century. We may term it, with some degree of accuracy, the declamatory style. This style owed much of its vogue to the design of the stage and to the fact that the stage had not grown pictorially interesting, although the mood of the public must have contributed to the vogue. The declamatory actor was a descendant of the Elizabethan actor who, unaided by the scene painter and the electrician but greatly aided by the poet, told the audience the time of day, the place, the condition of the weather, and other facts relevant to the action of the play ; who had to create atmosphere, if it was to be created, largely through voice and words ; who had to recite rhetorical plays in a more or less rhetorical manner.

The declamatory actor made his appeal to the ear rather than to the eye. His task was more difficult than that of the present day actor in that he had to rely upon his voice for doing many things which are now done by scenery and lighting. His stage was dimly lighted. A huge apron extended out into the audience, and in order to be clearly seen by them, he frequently left the proscenium frame and the stage proper, and advanced down the apron until he was near, and almost in the midst of, his audience. There he stood, often

alone, without any great assistance from lights or background. There he had to play upon his vocal apparatus as though it were an orchestra and through it had to draw his audience into the spirit of the play and move them to the desired emotion.

At present we are disposed to call declamatory acting old-fashioned, inferring when we use this word that the acting is neither as good nor as desirable as the type of acting which we accept as our own. We have a feeling that this style of acting is not right because it is formal and unrealistic. We suspect that we would not be deeply moved by it and would be amused by it if we heard it on the stage. Yet, if we can take the comment and criticism of honest, intelligent theatre-goers of the period of declamatory acting, we must believe that their theatre experiences were thrilling and joyous, that the actors were accorded deeper admiration than those of our own times, and that the audiences were moved profoundly by this style of acting. Even today we have occasional opportunity to hear one of the actors of the "old tradition." When we do, those of us who have been schooled in the modern style are at first scornful; we may remain unmoved for a time; but if the old actor is a good actor, we gradually come under the spell of his voice and leave the hall or theatre with a fresh experience for our storehouse of memory, and with

a respect for that which we scorned because we did not know anything about it.

Declamatory acting moves us by sound, by tone, by the power of words; it makes full use of the beauty and effectiveness of language. It is akin to the art of music rather than the art of painting, and surely we would not assert that the appeal of music is not among the very finest and happiest to be found among the arts. In declamatory acting it is evident that inflection, tone, diction,—all of the qualities of speech and their applications,—are brought into use; that it requires speech training and technique far beyond that which is required today; that it has the power to stir our imaginations, to rouse our emotions, to visualize the scene in the listener's mind. If we were to declare that it is an inferior style of acting, we would have difficulty in ascribing greatness to many of the actors whom we honor.

Yet, declamatory acting has its evils and dangers as well as its virtues and advantages. It tends to narrow acting to a single expression, it usually emphasizes but one of the several mediums of expression, and it overstresses this medium, the voice, out of honest proportions. It frequently gives the actor with a grand voice undue importance in the play, and leads him to use his instrument of speech more than is good either for himself or for the play. In the last century it directed the actor to

the center of the stage where, having pushed the remainder of his cast into the background, he turned his voice loose upon his audience and ran the whole gamut of vocal gymnastics to a degree which would not now be tolerated.

There is a style of acting which is allied in our minds with declamatory acting, though in reality it has but little connection with it. This style we may call romantic acting. Perhaps the association comes from the fact that both romantic and declamatory acting seem exaggerated and formalized to us, both were found in unrealistic plays, and both stressed audible rather than visible acting during the immediate past.

The romantic play portrays the ideal rather than the real. It is not concerned with what we actually are or what we actually do, that is, with how we light a cigaret or how we behave at table; it is concerned with what it pleases us to think we once were like, or with what we might become if we were free to follow our dreams and our adventurous desires. The romantic play is really a "play." It perhaps does not adhere closely to facts or to character, but suggests what they might be like and builds a romantic story around them; it exaggerates and glorifies certain qualities which we like to see glorified. So, the hero of a romantic play is not a Hamlet or a Captain Flagg, but is a brave adventurer, preferably youthful, who combines all

the noble virtues and is surprisingly free of vices. If the hero has vices, these are removed, as are the vices of Villon in the romantic play *If I Were King*. The heroine is without blemish or stain and lives through her many sorrows and sufferings without harm to her sweetness and goodness.

Such a type of play calls for definite characteristics in acting not called for by the realistic play of today. Grace, poise, good physique, charm of personality, pleasing voice,—these are demanded of the romantic actor. And he must exaggerate his acting as the declamatory actor exaggerated his voice: his gestures must be more sweeping, his declarations of fealty more forceful, his strength greater, his agony more intense than we see on our present day stage. True, the romantic actor presents to us a fanciful, unreal figure; yet his effect upon the audience is pleasant, and the audience enjoys his playing with the hearty simplicity of a child rather than with the sophistication of the modern adult.

The romantic actor is called into the theatre, not by stage conditions but by the demand of the times. A scientific age or a cynical age, an age interested in analysis and desirous of turning the stage into a pulpit or schoolroom or laboratory, has but little mood for the romantic actor. He is the product of a contented rather than a discontented period, of a time which has leisure to dream

and which is not overwhelmed with the problems of life. As for the romantic actor, he is not frequently numbered among the very great actors, probably because the greatest is not demanded of him. But he is neither to be scorned nor pitied. He usually enjoys his work more heartily than does the realistic actor, and he reaps an enviable reward in the pleasure which he brings to his audience.

Because of the interest in science and the scientific study of man, and because of the growth of the humanitarian spirit and its attendant interest in man, the mind of the public turned, during the last years of the nineteenth century, towards realism. Realism in art developed as realism in thought grew, and the realistic play found its way to the stage.

When realism appeared on the stage, the audience was in a questioning state of mind. It was interested in actual, not exaggerated men and women, in actual, not romantic stories. It wanted life represented, not in fine phrases, not in part, not ideally, but as it actually existed; otherwise, how could it find answers to the social questions which it asked in its plays, how could it study life, how could the play discuss problems of capital and labor, of the injustice of justice, of morals, of racial oppression? The dramatist became a realist, and the actor had to change his style, to relearn his technique in order to give a realistic interpreta-

tion. He had to be like the character, he had to live on the stage in the same manner and with the same mannerisms as the character in actual life; he had to represent reality so exactly that we forgot he was acting in his perfect illusion of reality.

The actor's style in this instance is sometimes called the naturalistic style. His voice cannot be always free and clear and beautiful, but must be harsh or thin or slurring according to the character he is portraying; his gesture must not be sweeping but must conform to the gesture of the character. All exaggeration and formality, and much suggestion was taken from acting and it became a matter of copying accurately from life.

It is clear that for an actor to make a success in the naturalistic school, he has to forget most of the training he has had in the declamatory or romantic schools. His character sense must be highly developed, and he must have a voice and body under great control and must possess a chameleon-like personality, or he cannot be given a wide variety of parts to play.

Indeed, the curse of this style of acting is that an actor frequently becomes associated with a type part. He has the physique, voice, temperament which permit him to represent accurately a certain type of individual: a hard-hearted political boss, a simpering girl, a dope fiend, a young lover, —to suggest examples,—and he is in danger of

being cast in this same type part during the whole of his acting career. Acting ceases to be much of an adventure for him, variety is gone and much of joy, and he is in the business of showing himself off nightly before his audience.

Yet, we are unfair if we say that realistic acting cannot be art, or if we say that it is an inferior kind of acting, or that the audience which likes it is as childish as the people who go to the art museum to see a painted bunch of grapes which are depicted so perfectly that they cannot distinguish between them and real grapes. Skill and art may be required in the creation of a complete, convincing, realistic characterization; and an audience, in witnessing a fellowman in struggle, emphasized and high-lighted as he is on the stage, is seeing something more than the people who look at the painted grapes. The audience, through the actor, is studying a fellow being in the manner in which the psychologist or the sociologist studies him.

At the other extreme from naturalistic acting we find a style of acting which emphasizes idea rather than actuality, suggestion rather than illusion. As Stark Young has written: "The theory of presentational acting implies that the actor takes to the audience what he has to act and shares the idea with them. In the resulting creation which he achieves, the audience has a definite part. Grasso, for example, when he does a death scene,

would as soon present it on the floor of the foyer. What he aims at is the presentation of the idea of death and its struggle."

Here we find a type of acting that seems to follow the trend of modern stagecraft in which we do not find a tree represented by stiff cloth and paint, but the idea of a tree suggested through the use of draped cloth and lighting. The actor is asked to present to us something beyond the character's voice, walk, and method of thinking; he is asked to present to us the idea which that character stands for, the idea of love or degradation, poverty or wilfulness; he is asked to present to us, not an individual struggling against the forces of fate, but the idea which is involved in this struggle.

Now this style of acting calls for an intelligence and imagination beyond the demands of any style we have mentioned. It makes of acting a very difficult task. Even the materials which become the mediums of acting referred to in the last chapter, are of less importance than intelligence and imagination. And this type implies both intelligence and imagination on the part of the audience. It resembles the symbolic acting of the Japanese Nōh plays in which the actors, as they do certain things, create in the audience which is trained in the tradition of the plays, the idea of a set of happenings which are not actually represented. It requires an alive, sensitive, intelligent audience made up of

people whose imaginations can be touched and who are able to see the pattern back of the actor's speech and actions.

We may say justly that naturalistic acting is often too unimaginative, too literal, too void of artistry; and on the other hand, that presentational acting is beyond the capabilities of most amateurs and their audiences. But we can discover good qualities in both styles; and we find that it is not impossible to bring the two styles closer together than they now are.

Several years ago we were amazed and won by the acting of the Moscow Art Theatre. We were told that the acting of this company was realistic. The actors behaved as actual human beings behaved, their voices were the voices of the characters they portrayed, and their gesticulation was that of a real world. Yet, as one of the actors in *The Lower Depths* moved about in the person of a nameless, voiceless character, as he sat, got up, stood, looked about, and slunk off into the darkness of the cellar, he was more than a nameless, wordless individual; there was a tremendous power of suggestion in his pose, his walk, his silence; he was not a single individual but the epitome of dozens, of hundreds of lives; there was conveyed something abstract, there was projected a pattern which is not present in most realistic acting. He was actual, but from "actuality" there came "reality," from

illusion there came suggestion, from representation abstraction.

The amateur will be a naturalistic actor because naturalistic acting is the order of the day. Our dramatists will continue to write about actual people in an actual world, and our audiences will continue to want to see such things for some time to come. Character portrayal is at the heart of modern drama and character creation is the supreme task of the present day actor. But the amateur naturalistic actor would do well to consider the accomplishment of the Moscow actors. He can go to actual life for his material. He may use the voice, gesture, and personality of actual life as he creates his character. But he may also find in his material an idea, a pattern: that which the character stands for, that which he expresses, that which makes him of importance. And through his understanding of this character, through communion with him, through careful selection of movement and business and careful emphasis in speech and action, he may give his characterization a suggestive power which the characterization in most amateur plays does not possess.

This goal we set for ourselves is difficult. It may be far off. But we have said before that acting has been taken for granted. We have not thought about it, we have not studied it; we have been without conscious plan and definite goal. We need

a goal. Even if we choose one beyond our present powers of attainment, our acting will be better for having striven towards it.

In the chapters that follow, we shall accept this spiritualized naturalism as the style of acting which we hope, some day, to approach. As we now take up the elementary principles of stage behavior, we shall have in mind our own stage, the naturalistic stage. We may seem to have lost sight of the goal we have just mentioned as we set down rules for standing and moving about; but let us remember that these things, too, are important and will help and not hinder us on our way to the goal.

(B) ELEMENTARY PRINCIPLES OF STAGE BEHAVIOR

In every art and craft there are a number of elementary principles, which if known and followed, will make the practitioner more adept in his work. Though many an actor has succeeded without a conscious study of the principles of his craft, it does not follow that a study of the principles would not have been of assistance to him.

In respect to the application of the elementary principles, experience shows us that no more than a hint, a suggestion, is necessary for some beginning actors. Almost instinctively they seem to grasp the principles underlying their stage work.

On the other hand, conscious study is necessary for some who, while possessing certain acting equipment, are not at home on the stage and need to be made so. In the present section we shall give attention to a number of conventions and rules which, when made his own, will develop the actor's stage sense and be of service to him in his actual work of acting.

The simplest and most fundamental of these refers to the stage itself. The stage has four sides, but since the audience sits opposite one side only, the actor must accept this situation and behave with it always in mind.

The stage, especially when it is set to represent an interior, is usually not arranged as an actual room would be arranged. The furniture is adjusted to fit the artificial conditions of the stage and at the same time keep an illusion of reality. The actor must behave unlike his manner in an ordinary room, but not so unlike that he will destroy or disturb the illusion.

The whole of the stage within the set forms the playing space, but three points need to be borne in mind: the spaces at the sides are in the least emphatic positions and are ordinarily undesirable as acting spaces for the important scenes; down stage center is the spot towards which action tends to converge; action and positions should not be

concentrated in one portion of the stage for any length of time, but should be distributed.

Several principles may be set down in respect to standing. First, although there is no right or wrong way to stand, because character and emotion dictate how an actor shall stand in every instance, there is a positive and negative way of standing. Whenever possible the actor should stand erect with both feet firmly on the floor; and we might add that he should stand in a position in reference to the audience which permits the audience to see clearly that portion of his body with which he is visibly expressing his emotion.

In relation to the audience it is not necessary to stand either full face or in profile. It is even permissible to stand with the back towards the audience. Standing squarely facing the audience during the delivery of a speech is dangerous, for it may suggest that the actor has turned towards the audience on purpose to deliver the speech, in which case the technique of the actor and not the impression he wished to create, is in the minds of the audience.

Neither can we be dogmatic in respect to the standing position of one actor in relation to that of another. Two actors may stand side by side, or facing each other, or at some angle between these positions. All are correct and all may be wrong.

The intensity and kind of emotion, the mental clash, the natures of the characters, and the ways in which they have been standing previously, determine largely their positions. For instance, if a girl is coquetting with a man, her body will most naturally form a right angle to his. If a man is bringing an enemy to task for lying about him, he will probably face him squarely. If two actors have maintained the same positions for some time, one or both may shift positions for no other reason than to avoid monotony.

A line of three or more actors across the stage looks unlikelike or "stagey"; ordinarily a triangle or a semicircle is much better than a line.

The test for positions is not made by remembering some conventional positions we have seen actors take on the stage, but by going to life itself; and then by modifying what we have learned from life to fit the peculiar conditions of the stage.

In a previous chapter on the body, we had occasion to offer an important recommendation about sitting. Other than this, what we have said concerning standing positions applies equally to sitting positions.

Much could be written upon the subject of movement and gesture. We shall be as brief and selective as possible. When doing anything on the stage, when we gesture or when, actuated by emotion, we move towards a doorway, we should

never seem to be conscious of our gesture or manner of walk, for if we are, our audience will be conscious of it also, and the impression or idea we mean to give will be lost.

When no movement is demanded of us, we should stand still. We should do nothing bodily until we can do something which will contribute to our characterization or to the dramatic progress of the scene.

We may distinguish between certain kinds of gesture. There is the gesture of character which tends to draw attention to the character of the person who makes it; there is the gesture of direction which draws attention to a character, object, or anything outside of, and away from the character making it; there is the gesture of emotion which is a spontaneous physical expression arising from an emotion within the character. In realistic acting we cannot reduce gesture to formula. A gesture may convey one impression when given by one character and another impression when given by another; it may now be the expression of one emotion and now of another. The character and the emotion dictate gesture.

We may distinguish two kinds of movement in stage business, which, in respect to their importance to the dramatic element, may be described as positive and negative. A positive movement is one which adds something to the drama, which carries

the scene forward, which is constructive. A negative movement is unimportant to the drama, is usually transitional, and may be likened to the changing of sides between innings. For example, a man moves forward to a table and discovers that an important book has disappeared. The audience suspects what is about to take place and his movement is staged; it becomes positive. But there are several people around the table before he advances. They must get out of the way. Unless there is a dramatic reason for moving them somewhere else and for staging this movement, they leave the table unobtrusively, in a manner which will not attract attention to the movement.

Both kinds of movement are found in the acted play. In both kinds, for the sake of naturalness, the actor should devise some simple motivation, some reason for his movement. Beyond this, positive movement is intentional, emphatic; negative movement is unemphatic, almost surreptitious. The actor, recognizing these two kinds of movement and realizing the importance or unimportance of a particular movement in the play, makes it either positive or negative.

There is the matter of the objective and the sense of location which is definitely related to stage movement. The actor must be able to make his way about the stage by means of a natural or developed sense of location. Many times he dare not

look in the direction of his movement because that towards which he wishes to direct the audience's attention and the spot towards which he is going are entirely different. For the sake of stage picture or dramatic effect, the director may move an actor from one place to another, but he may want the attention of the audience on an entirely different place.

For instance, an actor's business may be to come in, walk past a table, and sit down at the other side of the room; but the important thing as far as the audience is concerned is the spot outside the room which the actor has just left. The actor must enter, and as he does so, focus attention on the spot outside. His movements towards his seat must not be accompanied by a consciousness of the table and the chair, but he must move unconscious of his route, keeping his mind on the spot outside, perhaps listening intently or focusing his eyes on this spot.

There is a general rule which may be applied to turning, but it is not that an actor should turn either towards or away from an audience; it is simply that an actor should make a turn which is comfortable and natural. Of course, there are times when a turn in one direction is better than a turn in another. When a turn brings a character face to face with his enemy, when it leads directly to an important piece of dialogue, or some such matter, then a turn should be made which will bring

the character to his objective swiftly and dramatically. But the test of a turn is ordinarily comfortableness and naturalness.

There is a good stage convention that the stage should "be opened up," that the whole stage should, during the play, be called to the attention of the audience. A character when leaving a group, may sometimes turn in a way which will open up the stage.

A word or two may be said about distances. In respect to the audience, the actor should, in most cases, cut down the distance between himself and his listeners rather than increase it; he should play down stage rather than up stage. In a small theatre, however, where illusion may be disturbed by too close contact, he should beware of playing over the footlights. Two things determine largely the distance between two actors in conversation: the size of the stage and the emotional or mental content of the scene. When the stage is small, they may sit at opposite sides of the room and still seem to behave naturally and retain the illusion. As the scene grows tense or confidential, or in any way becomes a matter between just the two, the distance between them is naturally shortened. Here, however, as in all cases, no absolute rules can be set down.

As more characters come on the stage and several groups form, the distance between the various

actors in each group should ordinarily be shortened, so that each group is a compact unit.

Two principles which concern speech may be set down. Because of the greater distances in the theatre, an ordinary voice cannot be used. Yet, in its tone, strength, and quality the ordinary voice must be suggested. The actor must seem to speak naturally when in reality he is speaking unnaturally. Carrying power is given the voice by allowing more time for the vowel sounds; and if this is not sufficient, by strengthening the voice without disturbing any of its qualities.

The nature of a speech determines its direction. The actor may speak directly to the person addressed, or he may speak while he continues to be occupied with whatever interests him, or he may look away from the person to whom he is speaking. The speech itself will usually tell him where to direct it. Since the declamatory style is no longer in vogue, he should not direct his speech towards the audience; even though he must convey his speech to the audience, he should not let them be aware that he is doing it.

There are certain stage conventions which are not so much principles as traditions that have become accepted as proper on the stage. Of these, we shall mention only one.

In life, we avoid crossing directly in front of someone else whenever possible. On the stage, if

the movement is positive, the actor's cross will be more emphatic if it is made in front rather than behind; and because of stage convention, this will not be looked upon as a breach of etiquette.

In a recent public performance given by amateurs, one of the actors crossed from left to right by going behind three other actors who were lined up across the stage. Now in life this would have been a reasonable thing to do; but on the stage, the sight of his journey was so unusual that most of the audience was conscious of an over-nice piece of stage business and the actor's exit, dramatically, was a failure.

Crossing in front, however, is not to be set down as an unbreakable rule. If it is more reasonable or natural to cross behind, and if such a crossing will carry with it the necessary emphasis, the convention should be broken. And one exception to the front cross must be observed: when a character is speaking, he should not be interrupted by someone passing between him and the audience.

(C) DRAMA AND STAGE TERMS

Since by this time the candidate must be anxious to begin the actual creation of character, we shall spend only a moment upon some of the drama and stage terms which the actor will, in time, make his own.

Of the kinds of drama, it is necessary to distinguish but four types: tragedy and melodrama, comedy and farce. In tragedy we have a series of events in logical sequence, which have a causal relationship, are emphasized for their tragic or serious values, and end in catastrophe. In tragedy there must be reason, motivation; character develops the action. In melodrama we have a series of events, and emphasis on the serious, and either a catastrophe or a "happy ending"; but in melodrama there is no law of reason and motivation, no logical development. The goal is effect, theatrical thrill, and logic of character or situation may be sacrificed to gain the effect.

In comedy also we have a logical development through a series of events which lead to a comic climax and conclusion. In comedy the viewpoint is humorous and the emphasis is upon the comic in character or situation, but the comedy is built upon reality and the test of reality may be applied to it. In farce we have comedy exaggerated beyond the limits of reality and the test of reality cannot be applied to it. We have probable people doing improbable things, or improbable people doing probable things, but somewhere in the characters or situations there is improbability or exaggeration.

The actor accepts each kind of drama as having a different effect upon the audience. Each demands

a different attitude and method of the actor. He adjusts his method to the type he is playing, exaggerating in farce, playing with reserve and with reality as a guide in comedy, seeking honest motivation in tragedy, and simulating and imagining motivation in melodrama. We shall have more to say about acting these four kinds of drama later.

A number of terms in common usage apply to the stage. *The front of the house* designates the part of the theatre in front of the stage; *back stage* refers to the part of the theatre behind the proscenium opening. The *proscenium opening* denotes the stage opening behind which the front curtain is hung. The *wings* refer to the stage space on either side of the proscenium, beyond the actual set. The *loft* or *flies* refers to the space above the stage. *Down stage* denotes a direction towards the footlights; *up stage* a direction away from the footlights. *Off stage* means off the actual playing space of the stage, outside the setting. *Right* and *left stage* refer to the actor's right and left.

With his preparation work done and with sufficient knowledge of the stage and its conventions at hand, the actor is now ready to consider the problems of preparing a part for the stage.

CHAPTER IV

THE ACTOR'S MAJOR PROBLEM: CHARACTER CREATION

(A) CREATING THE CHARACTER

CHARACTERIZATION is the center of most of our modern representational drama; character creation is the major task of the modern naturalistic actor.

We have become eagerly interested in human life, in the mental, moral, and physical natures of man. We have become concerned in drama with individuals who represent a class or an idea, with individuals who show us our fellow men engaged in all sorts of struggles, and we are willing to study individuals who represent no more than a single example of humankind. More than story and idea, and even in plays of story or idea, we are interested in the individual characters in the play.

Our interest in character and our subsequent demand for character, have taken a long step from the days of the Greeks when the characters were simple, formalized, and exhibited only one or two general qualities of weakness or strength. Our

plays are now filled with subtle, complex, highly-individualized human beings.

If we question this, all we need to do is to pick up at random a half dozen modern plays and examine them. Roy Bowman, Ina Bowman, Verna, and Rev. Albaugh in *Bride of the Lamb* are all completely differentiated, living individuals. Amy, Tony, Joe, Father McKee, The Doctor, The R. F. D. in *They Knew What They Wanted* are as clear and as different one from the other as they would be in actual life. *The Show Off*, *Craig's Wife*, *What Price Glory*, *You and I*, *Hell Bent for Heaven*, *The Butter and Egg Man* are filled with well drawn characters. The actor must create a highly individualized character before he can adequately interpret Aubrey Piper, Mrs. Craig, Sergeant Quirt, Ronny, Rufe Pryor, or Fanny.

This attention to characterization is found in the one-act play also. In *Trifles* Mrs. Hale is not the same sort of woman as Mrs. Peters; she must be an individual and Mrs. Peters must be an individual if the play is to "get across." In the same play Peters, Hale, and the Attorney represent three well drawn types of men found in a mid-western community. *The Poet's Wife* and *The Countrywoman* are sharply contrasted characters in *Will-o'-the-Wisp*. Cecil Harburton in *The Constant Lover* is individualized from a certain Eng-

lish type and Evelyn Rivers is a representative of a type of English girl.

So we could continue. Suffice it to say that modern drama is full of subtle, complex characterizations which the actor has to interpret for his audience.

Once it was common opinion that there were two kinds of parts to be distinguished in acting: straight and character parts. It was said that in the straight part the actor remained himself, acted himself, adding moods, gesture, passion, as the dialogue and the author's descriptions directed. The actor created nothing; he only exhibited and added to his own personality. In the character part the actor went outside himself and from observation, experience, and the dialogue and descriptions of the dramatist, created a new figure, diverse from himself.

Even if this division could be made of the drama of another age, it cannot be made today. We would argue the point of the existence of these two types in first-rate present day drama. In our drama the so-called straight part very rarely appears. Because a character is young and has no physical defects and is normal in nature and mentality, it does not follow that he is "straight" and that his spirit and mind are the same as those of the actor who is to portray him. The playwright probably conceived an individual young man, made up of a

specific combination of qualities and attributes; and the actor must find these qualities and create a character who is as definitely a personality as if he were a tramp, a miser, or a murderer and spoke with a cracked voice and wore whiskers.

Where is the straight part in *Candida*, in *The Pigeon*, in *Mary Goes First*, *Anna Christie*, *Expressing Willie*, or *The Show Off*? The straight characters, as we are wont to conceive them, still occupy a high place in the motion pictures, but they have all but disappeared from our stage plays.

The beginning actor cannot get far in his stage career by making only a direct personal appeal, by exhibiting himself. In the last analysis there is no such thing as a straight part. Every part is a character part. The actor has to create a personage outside himself, a man who is distinct and different, who is a creature studied, understood, objectively seen, built up in the mind and imagination and expressed through all the mediums of expression. Also, he should learn to create characters not like himself but unlike himself; he should not concentrate on a type or individual which he resembles, which he "fits," but on types and individuals differing from himself. This is important to the beginner. If he disregards it, he may become a type actor associated with one and only one personality.

When the actor has heard the play read and has been given the manuscript, he should begin work on his character. (The actor should, of course, have the complete play to work from and not just his own part. Most certainly he should have more than his own lines and the cue lines of the others.) As he begins his work he should remember that characterization is two-fold. There is the character as he appears: his movements, gestures, qualities of voice, the clothes he wears, and all those external qualities and attributes which are an integral part of his personality. There are also the mental and emotional qualities of the character, the habits of mind, the "heart," the sentiments, the whole inner nature made up of what and how he thinks, of what and how he feels. So, the actor has a double problem. He has the task of creating both the external and the internal character.

The actor with the trained body and voice will find the external character the easier to express. The actor who is sensitive and imaginative will find the inner characterization the easier. But, let us keep in mind, the character has both an inner and an outer self. The actor must know both of these selves; and he must be able to present both of them to the audience.

Let us now approach the actual problem of character creation. When the actor knows the play and realizes what it is about, and what is to be

done with it, his first task is the complete comprehension of the character he is to portray. Let him not be diverted by the statement that acting is an expression of emotion. Let him not think that his job is primarily inspirational. Let him not cultivate the idea that mental application is unnecessary. Good hard mental effort precedes emotional expression and inspiration. After his mental work has been well done, then perhaps he will have a gleam of inspiration, then will his emotional expression be sound and effective.

He must understand, he must know all about this character which he is going to reveal to his audience through his own person and personality. How shall he set about his task? As he begins it is presumed that he knows something about life in general and people in particular, that he has some understanding of psychology and human nature, that he knows something about human failings and virtues; for he cannot interpret life if he knows nothing about life. An actor cannot act a drunkard if he knows nothing about drunkards. An actress cannot represent the external and internal characteristics of a nun if she knows nothing about nuns.

We are not saying that the man should get drunk and the woman enter a convent before they attempt their parts. These acts might not give either any of the understanding he needs. The

knowledge does not have to be gained through personal experience. Observation and study are better. Leon Errol, our funniest interpreter of the inebriate, if we are to take his word, is not a drinking man.

The actor begins to study the play by concentrating upon his own part. He has to understand his character thoroughly. So he goes to the character itself and studies first the playwright's remarks about the character and his manner of speaking and behaving for whatever revelation they may contain; for the modern author does not neglect his characters in the matter of descriptive passages and stage directions.

Let us say an actress is going to undertake the part of Mrs. Midget in *Outward Bound*. First, of course, she must have some conception of the play as a whole. She must know that it is a play of idea and atmosphere interpreted through character reaction to the idea of death and the hereafter; that the play must be carefully and sensitively acted; that the tone of the play must not be gloomy and depressing.

Then she may begin on the stage directions and parenthetical descriptive comments. The description of Mrs. Midget as she first enters is as follows:
 > "Mrs. Midget wanders in from the deck. A poor charwoman in black little bonnet, black shawl and dress—her best. Very humble, simple, and obvi-

ously out of place in these strange surroundings. But sweet and motherly.”¹ Later on the author again says that she “wanders on.” When Mrs. Cliveden-Banks remarks that no one could possibly be called Midget, the author states that Mrs. Midget “warms in quick resentment.” In another place she speaks “resentfully.” Once she “wipes her neck with her handkerchief.”

From the stage directions and descriptive passages the actress may begin to construct the character of the woman she is going to interpret. Externally Mrs. Midget gives the impression of poverty, of neatness, of a low occupation, of being unused to the manners of society, and unacquainted with an ocean ship. Internally she possesses the qualities of humility, simplicity, sweetness, and motherliness; yet she has pride and can be resentful. The playwright further suggests that she is a likable, sympathetic old woman. This is not her full character, but it is the beginning of her character, gained from a study of only a few of the stage directions and descriptions.

The actress continues her study by examining Mrs. Midget’s speeches in order to see if they tally with the author’s descriptions and in order to add more to the growing characterization. Her first

¹ This and other quotations below from Sutton Vane’s *Outward Bound* are copyrighted by Boni & Liveright and used by permission.

speech is to Mrs. Cliveden-Banks. She says: "You'll excuse me, mum, but—" A few speeches farther on: "No, very pleased to meet yer. You see, mum, I 'ad to follow yer because you see, mum, I've been struck all of a 'eap." She uses the incorrect expression "as it were" which amuses Mrs. Cliveden-Banks and she endeavors to correct herself with: ". . . it were like this, *as it was*." She is repeatedly saying "Thank you, sir," and "Thank you, mum." When she warms in quick resentment to Mrs. Cliveden-Banks' insulting remark about her name, she says: "Midget's as good a name as any other name, Midget is. And don't you forget it, old Mrs. 'Igh and Mighty. My name's Midget all right, Midget married me all right, and I can prove it, and I've got my lines, which was a job to get as I admit." And later: "I've nothing to 'ide, I've not, I'm not one of these—."

As she begins to puzzle over the strange situation of her being on shipboard she says: "Am I ill? I don't think so. I don't feel ill. And yet, I said to Mrs. Roberts last Thursday—or was it Wednesday?—never mind, I said to 'er anyway, I says, 'What I want,' says I—or did she say it to me? Never mind, it don't make no difference, one of us says to the other, 'What I or you want' according to whichever one of us did say it, 'is a thorough 'oliday.'"

So the actress goes on with her study, verifying

and adding to her conception of the character gained through the descriptions. If the playwright has written his character well (and in this instance he has), each speech will be in character or will reveal some new phase of the character. The actress is now able to justify the author's descriptions. To what she already knows she adds an ungrammatical, Cockney dialect, a simplicity of mind, a sensitiveness, a timidity of spirit and speech, an ignorance of much of the world; and she is able to build up the environment in which Mrs. Midget has lived and to reconstruct important instances in her past life.

The actress has a third study to make. She can discover much about her character in the reactions of other characters to Mrs. Midget: in what they say and do, in what they suggest. Mrs. Cliveden-Banks' first reaction to Mrs. Midget is the exclamation, "Good gracious!" Mrs. Cliveden-Banks reacts now with amusement, now with disgust to the old woman's slangy language and her bad grammar. She behaves and talks in a superior, condescending manner. She cannot conceive of the charwoman as a passenger. Tom Pryor, another passenger, and of a lower station in life than Mrs. Cliveden-Banks, likewise cannot accept Mrs. Midget as an equal. He calls to the steward: "Oh, steward, just get someone to show this woman steerage—er—third class deck—or something, will

you?" Neither has any respect for Mrs. Midget's sensibilities. Even in her presence Mrs. Cliveden-Banks exclaims: "Well, then—if she eats—and if there's only one class—she will eat in the same place as we shall. It can't be done, I shall disembark immediately."

The actress, then, continues to build up her character, verifying her previous impressions and adding to them from what she learns from the actions and speeches of other characters. It is obvious that this necessary study cannot be made if the actress has only her own part and her cue words. She needs the entire play.

Understand, we have made no complete study of the character of Mrs. Midget. We have considered only one, the first, scene in which she appears. We have done no more than reveal that a comprehension of the character can be obtained from a study of what the playwright says of her, of what she herself says, and of what the other characters say of her. These are the three sources. Each is of value, each should be investigated, each yields necessary information. From the three the actress can gain a clear and full understanding of the character she is to interpret.

From our experience we would be willing to say that nine out of ten beginning actors will not make the study we have outlined. They are either incapable of the mental analysis necessary, or more

likely they are lazy and leave the work to the director. But this is not the director's business; it is the business of each actor who undertakes to act a part.

The first step in the creation of character is taken with the mind and results in a mental conception of the character, a complete understanding of his physical, mental, and spiritual nature. The next step is accomplished largely through the imagination. This step we may designate the realization of the character by transferring him to actual life.

We do not recommend that the actor, the moment he understands his character, should hurry off and dissect his friend or stand on the street corner and collect points from the passers-by. He need not be absurd. But we would recommend that the actor take his character away from the pages of the book and the stage of the theatre, and transport him, in his imagination, to a real world. The character becomes realized as he becomes identified with a living, not a make-believe world.

We are presuming, then, that the actor has come in contact with life before he undertakes a specific character. A recluse makes a poor actor. There is an old journalistic expression: "an eye for copy." This eye for copy is valuable to the actor. He should cultivate his powers of observation, he should enjoy meeting and studying all kinds of

people, so that when he is assigned a part he is able to call upon his memory of actual people or can find those who can help him realize this character. An interesting short story by Leonard Merrick called *A Very Good Thing for the Girl* tells of an actor's endeavor to realize his character in actual life.

The actor, then, should see his character not on the stage but in life. He should see him on the streets and in the living rooms and kitchens, associating with actual people. He should conceive of him as a flesh and blood human being. Life, and not characters from either plays or books, life, and not the memory of some actor's interpretation of a similar character, life, and not the imagination alone is the material from which the characterization is moulded. The character must live in the mind, then through the imagination he should become associated with a real world. Only through this change will he become real on the stage.

Before the actor has progressed thus far in the work of building a character, he has endeavored to identify himself with the character; already he is thinking of *himself*, as the bully he has imagined and whom he sees walking down the streets of Detroit. But there is another step we should take before we are ready to talk about getting into the part,—a step which will vivify the realization and round out the character. We are not ready to mem-

orize lines until we know all we can know about a character. The more we know about him, the more easily can we give meaning and conviction to the specific lines and action of the play. It is advisable, then, to study and think all around a character, to work out, in a way, his biography.

Such a proposal may seem beside the point to some, or may seem to involve the expenditure of too much time. As a matter of fact, it is not beside the point but is directly to the point. When an actor is preparing to play an historical character, he does not confine himself to the dramatist's descriptions and the speeches of the play. He studies the history of the time and he reads all he can find on the life of the character. Think of an actor who knew nothing about Abraham Lincoln basing his entire interpretation on the material found in Drinkwater's play!

If biographical knowledge is helpful in the creation of an historical character, why should it not be helpful in the creation of a fictitious dramatic character? True, we have no books which narrate the events in the boyhood of our character, but our author has given us, in all probability, a fairly complete idea of the character, has suggested his environment, and has hinted at much of his background and early life in his portrait of the man as he appears at present. Is it not reasonable that the actress playing Mrs. Midget will be a better, more

the character
edious character?

convincing Mrs. Midget if she takes the incidents mentioned in the play: the wedding, the conversation with Mrs. Roberts, and others,—and reconstructs the scenes in which they occurred? If she goes back even farther and accompanies the poor, lovable old soul from a girlhood of poverty into a womanhood of toil and trouble?

Nine out of ten amateur actors never see their characters outside the specific scenes of the play; and nine out of ten of their characterizations are shallow and convey no impression of reserve knowledge, for they are telling all they know about the character in the lines they speak. The reason for this insufficiency is to be found in the fact that they have not studied all around their character, they do not know his biography.

The question may be asked: Does not this work require a great amount of time? The answer is: Imagining a biography takes very little time. The biography is built up and put together during odd moments when the actor, if he were not thinking about his character, would perhaps be thinking about various odds and ends which at the time are neither as important nor as interesting as this imaginative biography.

To the actor who has kept his imagination alive, the making of a biography is good fun. The actor, starting from a knowledge which a study of the character has given him, simply allows his fancy

freedom to enjoy itself. The actor who has undertaken the interpretation of the character of Ferrand in Galsworthy's *The Pigeon*, is transported by his fancy to the vagabond's early days in Paris, —to the day when the father, a keen-minded reprobate, disappears. He sees the bitterness of the deserted mother, and feels this bitterness eating its way into the mind of the boy. He lives with the lad through the mother's futile struggle, and stands with him by the broken window on that gray Paris dawn, when cold and hungry, the boy looks out upon the unfriendly city, alone. He passes through Ferrand's contacts with life: with the beggars and criminals, with the kindly Christian who pities and befriends him. He reconstructs those events which bring cynicism, understanding, resignation, and hopelessness. He sits beside the ne'er-do-well as he talks philosophy with the English artist at the fountain.

Thus Ferrand becomes a fully developed human being with a history. So when Ferrand stands at the door of Wellwyn's studio on that snowy Christmas eve, he is not an actor who five minutes before was powdering his make-up in the dressing room; he is a personality with nearly forty years of memories of life. Is it not reasonable to ask that the biographical phase of character creation be given some attention?

When the actor has comprehended his character,

realized him, and knows something about his life before he reached the crisis recorded in the play, then it is time for him to begin the study of actual speeches and actual scenes of the play. As we know, the method of play production as now practiced does not permit this. It usually decrees that an actor be given his part on Monday night (he probably has never seen the part before), that he give his attention to stage business on Tuesday night, and that he have the lines of Act I memorized on Saturday night. This is unfair to the actor, but in most cases he can do little or nothing about it. He should, however, even under such conditions, spend as much time as he can possibly spend during the first days on a study of the character.

He should try for character, should endeavor to become identified with character before he memorizes lines; but since this order can rarely be practiced, we will take up the question of memorizing here.

We sometimes read about methods and rules for the memorizing of lines. Since memorizing is, technically, a very simple process for most people, and since there is much variation in the habits of memorizing, no method will be outlined; but one or two points in connection with memorizing will be mentioned.

First, let the actor memorize his lines carefully

and as they are written. If the play is a first-rate play by a good dramatist, the dramatist has undoubtedly thought out his dialogue carefully; he has given it conciseness, exactness, character, perhaps rhythm and suggestive power. It is futile for the actor to attempt to improve upon it; it is unjust to his character and the whole play for him to half-memorize it. If he has studied the dialogue for his characterization, he has been given an appreciation of its qualities, and he will try to be careful when memorizing it.

Second, let him memorize, or at least pay close attention to, the parenthetical directions which concern his action and speaking of lines. How often does a director have to call the attention of his amateurs to the fact that the author has written such directions as "coldly," "disregarding a sign from De Levis," "dryly," "concealing a smile," "aghast," "sullenly." They even overlook such directions as "taking off his tie," "changing into slippers," "nodding towards the wall, Left," "straightening up," "looking at his watch." It is not the director's business to call the actor's attention to these things. They concern the actor directly. They are often most helpful to him. A girl, playing the part of Ruth Honeywill in Galsworthy's *Justice*, will find the directions for her speech and movement carefully selected for their

dramatic significance and nearly sufficient without an additional word from her director.

Sometimes a director says: "When you get your lines, we will begin to try for character." The actor knows by this time that this is bad advice. He should begin to associate himself with character as early as possible. But some actors, especially those of little or no experience, are greatly handicapped in their bodily and vocal expression of character as long as they have a copy of the play in their hands; the words bother them; they seem free to concentrate upon character only when they are free of the manuscript. In such a case it may be well for the director not to insist upon their trying to express character during the period of memorizing; but this does not free them from the responsibility of working on character by themselves. Character is not something which can be put on, suddenly, like a coat; we must live with it and grow into it. The time to begin to try for character is the moment the character is clear in the actor's mind. If he does not understand this person he is about to interpret, then he should devote more study to him and seek the help of the director or of someone else.

One may have worked on a character by himself, however, and still find some difficulty when he tries to express him in rehearsal. A hard moment for the

inexperienced actor is when he first appears in rehearsal as Dave, the old cabman, and not as Art Skinner, a sophomore. He seems so handicapped, so self-conscious, so insufficient, and he simply does not know what to do. Such a realization of his shortcomings is nothing disgraceful; it is a compliment to his own sensitiveness and honesty. A director, if he is blind and unfeeling, may be harmful at this time. He ought to be lenient and sympathetic and he ought to keep visitors out of the rehearsal room. The actor should be urged to free himself, to risk mistakes, and to try, try, even though the result is far from satisfactory; and conditions should help him and not hinder him. The actor, we say, should be willing to try, "to make a fool of himself" in trying. What is the difference if he does? This is nothing but a rehearsal. Thousands have "made fools of themselves" before. If he is in error, the director will correct him before the night of the performance. Let him have confidence in his director.

There is no absolute answer to the question: "How shall I try for character?" One thing the actor should not do is to begin by imitating the character's walk or speech. A walk which is an imitation conveys only the idea of a physical accomplishment unless it is the expression of character. The actor should give his own mind a rest and try to *feel* the mind and spirit of the character,

working from the inner to the outer characterization. Is there not a statement somewhere that we take on the habits and looks of those with whom we associate? Something like this should happen in our study of, and our attempts at, characterization; only now we bend all our efforts consciously towards being the same as this person with whom we have been associating. We understand him, we are sensitive to him, we hear his voice, see his gestures and movements; and we try to make him our own, not through our minds or wills, but through our feelings.

What is the probable result of our first efforts? More likely than not, we fail. But for a moment, for the length of a speech, perhaps, we recognize (or the director recognizes) that we have succeeded. We spoke the speech in the character of Dave, the cabman! We try again. But again we fail. We continue trying, concentrating upon the character whom we know so well, feeling him, living the scene with him. Again we are rewarded with a momentary victory.

Becoming a character is not a process which can be traced step by step. Neither is it a process which always operates in the same way. For instance, there are actors who work and suffer for days, even weeks, without being able to give expression to character. Then suddenly, almost miraculously, Art Skinner, the sophomore, disappears and Dave,

the cabman, stands in his place. The actor is transformed during a single rehearsal. Thereafter his character difficulties are few and he is at ease.

Other actors try now and fail, and try again and succeed, holding the character for a few speeches, then dropping it. They get into the character for one scene but are unable to be other than themselves during the remainder of the rehearsal. But at the next rehearsal, they take on the character for two scenes, and finally they can go through the entire play "in character."

Still others grow into a character slowly, almost imperceptibly, adding a habit of mind, a quality of voice, a mannerism, building up the character bit by bit, as it were, living in their old house while they build the new upon the same ground. And even the same person may become one character in one way and another in a different way.

The point is: first understand, then feel, then try. If the mediums of expression have been developed, the reward will be there, even though it may seem to be a very small one in return for so much hard work and suffering.

During these days when an actor is working on the building of character, he should not pay much attention to anything else. The director may be fussy about stage business, or the pace of the play, or some other necessary matter, but the actor, at this time, need not take the director's anx-

iety very seriously. He should recognize that the director is justified in feeling anxious, for he sees and has to worry over all that must be done before the play is ready for the opening night; but the actor has one important problem which must be solved *now*; he must concentrate on characterization.

When he begins to see light in the darkness, when he is able to live in the character and commences to enjoy himself, then he can turn his attention to such matters as advancing just so near to the table, center, to making the group at lower right a little more compact, to hurrying or retarding his speeches. Then he can give his mind to two other matters which are now of importance: putting the character into the specific action of the play, and making him a unit in a larger, greater unit.

We have been speaking as though characterization were all important. For the time it has been. The play was not written for the character, however, but the character for the play. The actor now shifts his viewpoint. He ceases looking within and looks about him. He forgets about the character's biography and concentrates upon what he is to do in the play. Stage business becomes important now, and the exact speeches of the character, and atmosphere, and tone. The actor brings this new self which he has created into a set of rigid stage con-

ditions and he subjects this self to the discipline which the conditions demand. He becomes a willing dependent of the director. He gets into the play.

As the actor gets into the play he sometimes unconsciously makes himself a unit in a larger unit; he is able to see the place he should occupy in the play and seeks to fill this place and do neither more nor less.

An artist sees a tree which he wants to include in a picture. But the tree will not make up the entire picture. A house, clouds, and a sunlit meadow are included. So, the artist puts the tree in its place in the composition. The tree, a unit, becomes a part of a larger unit in which it adds to the totality of effect.

The character which the actor has found is not the entire play. The character has been included in the play, shall we say, to contrast with another character, or to get across exposition, or to make objective an idea, or perhaps he is one of a group of characters which is presented to demonstrate some theory, to vivify some locality. He does not stand alone. He has a definite relationship to the other characters, a duty towards them; he has a definite obligation to the play as a whole.

In order to make himself a unit in a larger unit, the actor does not employ technical devices. Usually all that is necessary is the simple recognition that he has certain obligations beyond character

creation. This recognition, if the actor is honest and desires to make the play a success, and we assume this to be true, will give him the inclination and the humility to put his character into that place in the play where it will fulfill its intended purpose, be that purpose important or unimportant.

May we add one final suggestion to this process of character creation? The actor, having learned his lines, sometimes casts the manuscript aside. This is a mistake. He should go back to it again and again. It is surprising how much we miss during our first study and even during our memorizing. We are looking for big things, or we are concentrating on words. In our subsequent readings we are very apt to discover meanings, moods, ideas which we overlooked before we knew our character well. Now we see them, and our character becomes clearer and fuller.

(B) THE CHARACTER IN THE PLAY: MOTIVATION

We have been saying a great deal about the creation of character. We have said very little about carrying this character over into the dramatic. The character can be brought to life without an examination of motivation, but it can never be interpreted with its full dramatic meaning without such an examination.

There is a guiding or controlling idea to be

found in the play as a whole ; there is a guiding or controlling idea to be found in the uttering of every speech and in every definite movement of the actor.

Two actors *A* and *B*, do not speak simply interesting or dramatic speeches throughout a scene, but speak these speeches to a purpose ; the speeches have logical connection ; the scene has emotional progress and contains a guiding idea. *A* does not merely cross the room ; he crosses the room because of something which has gone before or because of something which is going to happen. *A*, *B*, and *A* speak three speeches. *B*'s speech is not a thing by itself. It is prompted by the first speech of *A*, and it, in turn, leads into and prompts *A*'s second speech. There are a why and a how clearly displayed or hidden away in the larger units of the play ; there are a why and a how in the individual speeches and action.

The authors of this book have found, during a long experience, that the most difficult subject in the compound problem of interpretation is that of motivation. The average amateur does not think about what he is saying ; he does not connect it in any way with the speech immediately preceding, or direct it towards the speech which follows ; he does not dream that it has anything to do with the first words of the exposition and the last line of the play. Perhaps this is because he has some vague

idea that acting is emotional and therefore the mind plays no part in acting after he has discovered his character. As we have said before, in this he is entirely mistaken. Emotion will not consistently direct him to a complete, logical interpretation. Emotion will not reveal motivation; rather, motivation suggests emotion. The time for emotion has not yet come. He must first know the *why*. He learns this, not through becoming submerged in his characterization and lost in the excitement of the scene, but through a mental process, through analysis for motivation.

This analysis is carried on, not in the rehearsal room, but in his study. He sees, of course, that each speech expresses a thought; but he searches beyond this thought for the feeling or idea which is uppermost in the character when he makes the speech.

For no other reason than that it is near at hand, we turn to Pinero's comedy *The Gay Lord Quex*. In Act II these speeches ² occur:

Quex: But why, may I ask, is this bliss reserved until after tomorrow?

Muriel: I had rather you did not ask me, Quex.

Quex: No? I see I am a day too soon in putting even that little question.

Muriel: Oh, I'll tell you this—I am going to turn over a new leaf after tomorrow.

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Now the thoughts expressed in this bit of dialogue are neither very interesting nor very dramatic. Before these simple speeches can be interpreted with Pinero's meaning, the actors must know and feel Quex and Muriel; they must know the controlling idea of the play and of the scene; the actress must know what is in Muriel's mind when Quex gives his first speech; this speech affects her in a certain way and prompts her reply; Quex reads beyond the words of her reply, and his second speech is governed by what he has discovered in her mind; and this speech again affects Muriel and her second speech has a slightly different mood back of it. The speeches, through a knowledge of what motivates them, take on a significance, a variety, an interest.

On the day upon which these words are being written, one of the authors attended two rehearsals of amateurs of several years' experience. In one play, during a scene between an intelligent doctor and a prospective woman patient, the doctor said: "Then do I understand—?" but was interrupted by the woman with: "Let me explain. That is what I came for—to explain."

Now these young actors were bright and capable, but they spoke these speeches with the same stress, the same idea (or lack of idea) as the speeches which preceded and followed. The boy gave no evidence of knowing what was in the doc-

tor's mind. The girl did not react to what was in the doctor's mind.

A new idea had come into the doctor's mind which prompted his "Then do I understand—?" It was the business of the actor to discover this idea and motivate the speech. The motivation could have been discovered easily. The woman had behaved queerly and the doctor was beginning to doubt her veracity. Had the actor thought of the doctor and woman in their immediate situation, this would have been clear. And the woman, aware of the doctor's suspicion, through what he said and his manner of saying it, would have found the why and how of her speech. She should have interrupted hastily and attempted to divert his attention to something else. An idea in the doctor's mind should have motivated his speech. This idea, expressed in the manner in which he spoke, should have reacted on the woman and motivated her speech.

In the second rehearsal, a girl rose from a chair and moved over to a sofa beside another girl. Her walk gave only the impression that her director had told her to move. She did not think of motivating her movement; she did not stop to consider why she moved.

There was a reason for her movement. A number of women characters were on the stage and an excited, gossipy scene had taken place. The host-

ess, who disapproved of the scene, had just broken in with: "I wonder where Mrs. Morris is? Our program will be late." Conversation came to a halt. Movement at such a time is natural. The girl should have first recognized this fact. But at this moment her eye caught the eye of Mrs. Albright, a close friend, to whom she had not spoken, and she should have gone to her with something of interest to communicate. Thus her movement would have been given motivation. She would have had a reason for moving.

During the same rehearsal another girl, portraying a sympathetic, modest, altogether wholesome little woman, sat in a chair near center. In a moment another girl, representing a vulgar, unsympathetic divorcée was to come in and sit in the same chair. The first girl had to leave the chair and walk to the farther side of the room. This she did, but her walk was obviously to make way for the second girl.

Now the director had a good idea in having these two contrasting characters occupy the same chair. But the girl's movement, which was executed without motivation, spoiled the idea.

The girl should have found a reason for leaving the chair. There was a good reason for her action. The mention of the arrival of this vulgar woman should have reacted upon her; it should have made her want to avoid the woman's presence;

the loathing in her mind should have caused her to rise and get as far away as possible.

What we are trying to show by these instances is that there should be logical motivation. The motivation is not always expressed in the stage directions nor is it apparent in the words themselves. It is found in the minds and the hearts of the characters. It is gained from a knowledge of character and of the controlling idea of the play or scene, and also from the speech and inner thought of the preceding character.

A few speeches ³ from the fantasy *The Maker of Dreams* may contribute to our exposition of motivation.

Pierrot has been talking about a girl whom he has seen and concludes:

Pierrot: . . . I wonder if it is possible for a woman to have a soul as well as such beautiful coloring?

Pierrette: She was made up!

Pierrot: I'm sure she was not. And how do you know? You didn't see her.

Pierrette: Perhaps I did see her.

Pierrot: Now look here, Pierrette, it's no good your being jealous. . . .

The motivation here is not clearly displayed but it is easily found. When Pierrette says: "She was made up" this is not an expression of what is uppermost in her mind. Pierrette is jealous and

³ Published by Samuel French. Used by permission of the publisher and the author, Oliphant Down.

her jealousy colors this speech. So her next speech: "Perhaps I *did* see her," expresses much more than the words indicate. There is motivation for her jealousy in the speech of Pierrot concerning the girl. Her two speeches, expressing jealousy in tone if not so much in words, react upon Pierrot and lead him into a rather unfeeling speech about her.

We should like to take one more example, this time a number of short speeches ⁴ from Louis N. Parker's little poetic play *A Minuet*. The Marquis is in his cell awaiting execution. The Marchioness, his wife, has come. The conversation has not been very satisfactory. These speeches then occur:

Marquis: This prison is no place for you. Farewell!

Marchioness: The room is ugly. I prefer my cell.

Marquis: Your cell!

Marchioness: Of course. I am a prisoner, too. That's what I came for.

Marquis: What?

Marchioness: To die with you.

Marquis: To die with me?

Marchioness: A Beaucherc could not fail.

Marquis: But—

Marchioness: Yes?

Marquis: The guillotine!

Marchioness: A mere detail.

⁴ Published by Samuel French. Used by permission of the publisher and the author.

Marquis: Pardon me, Marchioness, but I confess
You almost made me show surprise.

Marchioness: What less
Did you expect of me?

Marquis: We'd lived apart
So long I had forgotten—

Marchioness: I'd a heart?
You had forgotten many things beside. . . .

The average amateurs, if left to themselves, will probably give some interpretation of these characters, will suggest that they are behaving under the stress of emotion, and may read the lines intelligently from a rhetorical point of view; what they will fail to bring out is the changing thought and heart of the Marquis and Marchioness; what they will fail to discover is reaction of speech upon the speech.

In the exposition preceding this scene we learn that the Marquis is a cynical, emotionless aristocrat,—or so he says,—who is awaiting the guillotine; that his wife is a light-hearted coquette “with never a trace of middle class emotion.” From what follows this scene we learn that in reality we have here two human beings hungry for love, hungry for all that their false living has denied them. We discover, then, that in this scene we are concerned with two unhappy souls facing death; we have presented the moment when one, fearful and wistful but remaining outwardly emotionless, attempts

to bring the two together once more; and we see in the reaction of the Marquis, the real humanity of the man breaking through this affectation. So, the little scene takes on a dramatic significance of which the young actors never dreamed.

As we examine each speech in turn, we see not only the emotional progress of the scene, but how each speech is motivated, how each calls for a definite dramatic reaction. Let us look at the scene speech by speech.

The Marquis has been alone, awaiting death. He has talked cynically of death, and of his wife. The Marchioness appears. She seems to be the sort of person he has described. She talks light-heartedly of affairs with other men. The Marquis is irritated. Courteously but firmly he says:

This prison is no place for you. Farewell!

The Marchioness we know has come for a definite purpose: to find and hold for a moment that love which they have buried in an affected social code. Yet she dares not ask for this outright. She says, to find out his reaction:

The room *is* ugly. I prefer *my* cell.

There is no hint of warmth in her tone, but the very words are startling enough to bring surprise. The Marquis stops on his way to the door. The

Marchioness' words motivate his halt. He asks, puzzled and surprised:

Your cell?

She sees the halt; she sees the surprise. Still she continues in the same tone:

Of course. I am a prisoner too. That's what I came for.

Her words sound matter-of-fact; but they carry a growing significance to him. He does not move. The veneer begins to slip from him as he asks simply:

What?

She replies simply; but her heart is beginning to beat rapidly, her mind is beginning to hope for success:

To die with you.

He tries to understand what she has said. His aristocratic affectation is fast deserting him. He repeats earnestly:

To die with me?

She replies proudly, calmly:

A Beauclerc could not fail.

Realization comes to him, and with it a horrifying thought:

But—

He begins the sentence and stops. His actions, his interest, the honest sincerity of his tone carry her hope higher:

Yes?

She asks the question, still hiding her emotion, urging him on to a fuller admission. With a voice no longer able to hide the emotion which has been roused within him he gasps, almost trembling:

The guillotine!

She still plays her game. Her words still suggest the emotionless aristocrat:

A mere detail.

He pauses a moment. He has betrayed himself. Then he recovers,—not completely but enough to acknowledge:

Pardon me, Marchioness, but I confess,
You almost made me show surprise.

She has seen! She has sensed what is in his heart and mind. There is a touch of happiness, of pride, perhaps of love in the way she asks her next question:

What less did you expect of me?

In apology, in explanation, thoughtfully, and regretfully he begins:

We've lived apart so long I had forgotten—

She finishes the sentence with the question:

I'd a heart?

He makes no denial. Her affectation is gone now. She is speaking, not as the Marchioness, but as a woman:

You had forgotten many things beside. . . .

The whole tone of the scene has changed. These people are no longer playing a game, they are no longer cold, mental, clever; they are a simple, pathetic man and woman, ruled by the heart, who begin together the search into the past for that happiness of romance which was once theirs.

We have been assuming throughout this discussion that every play has sound character development and logical motivation. This is not true of some types such as melodrama, mystery plays, and farce. When the actor finds that the controlling or guiding idea is not present, that logically and psychologically one speech does not prompt the next, he has to do some inventing for himself. He should make believe there is motivation; he should say: "I will think that thus-and-so is the reason why I do this or say that." Even the simulation of motivation will help him in his acting.

It is true that some parts of some plays may "get across" if the actor knows nothing at all

about the motivation of his speeches and actions; but it is equally true that other parts will be meaningless, colorless, and will not be an interpretation of the dramatist's intentions, if he does not analyze the why and how of his lines and actions. This task is too often left entirely to the director. Certainly the director, who sees the play as a whole, is concerned with the question of motivation; but the actor also should be concerned; he should share the task with him.

We are tempted to make this stronger. Actually the director should not share the task. Motivation is the actor's business. He should attend to it.

CHAPTER V

MINOR PROBLEMS

ALL directors who have worked with amateurs in modern drama, and all amateurs who have studied a part in a modern play, recognize the importance of characterization; but there are dozens of other problems which, in particular instances, assume places of major interest. We cannot take up every problem which may arise. What we shall do is call to mind a number of the most common ones. These we shall group under six heads, namely: minor problems of characterization, problems of speech, of movement, of the dramatic, of the audience, and problems arising from modern stagecraft.

(A) MINOR PROBLEMS OF CHARACTERIZATION

The amateur sometimes asks the question: "Ought I or ought I not to feel the emotions of the character I am playing?" As previous writers have pointed out, there have been contrary opinions expressed upon this question, and it is possible to

amass a formidable group of critics in support of either side of the question which we choose to take.

Louis Calvert gives us a starting point for our discussion, as well as good advice, when he says: "There are times when he [the actor] must appear so blinded with rage that he must commit murder; can that passion literally be felt by the actor? It seems to me that all passion must be kept under a certain control and within the pale of art. It is also evident that to maintain this control of necessity grows more difficult as the actor gains in his power to express great passion. . . . In the rehearsing we may do in private, it is perhaps well to give way to uncontrolled passion to develop our power of expressing it; but while acting, we must always remain master of our resources."¹

Our own reasoning and experience inform us that since a play is motivated by emotion rather than intellect, since the actor's task is to tell the emotional history of his character rather than the mental, then certainly acting is fundamentally emotional. Since the amateur has to project emotional history, he has either to feel the emotions he is portraying, or he has to make believe that he is feeling them. Our experience shows us that very, very few beginners can make believe the emotions successfully. To do this ordinarily requires a tech-

¹ From *Problems of the Actor*, copyrighted by Henry Holt and Company. Used by permission.

nique and a knowledge beyond their experience. So, we would conclude, beginning actors should try to feel the emotions.

However, we all know where uncontrolled emotion carries us. We also know that a play is carefully designed, requiring shifts in emotion in specific places. By giving ourselves over to a dominating emotion, we cannot be sure that we will project just what the dramatist wishes presented. Had we simply endeavored to feel the emotions in the scene from *A Minuet* previously discussed, without paying attention to character and motivation, could we have discovered the emotional meanings of the scene? Would we have had a guide to the emotional progress of the scene?

It is far wiser to see and understand with our minds first; to recognize what emotions are demanded and just how much of these emotions is good for the scene and character; to see clearly our pattern. Then we may, with some prospect of success, give our emotions freedom *within the limits we have prescribed.* When we know what emotions dominate the scene in *A Minuet*, when we understand the scene, when we have constructed our pattern, then we are free to feel the Marquis and Marchioness, to emotionalize their speech and behavior.

Our knowledge of character, of motivation, and of the purpose of the scene, should stand ready to

direct our emotional expression and keep it within bounds.

This, we believe, is a fairly accurate statement of the case theoretically. But for this to hold true in practice, we must have an actor with a nice balance in the control and expression of his emotional and mental natures; and most amateurs do not possess this balance. The beginner either does not feel enough or he feels too much. A director either has to be stirring him up so that he will feel the emotions sufficiently, or he has to be quieting him down because his emotional expression is beyond bounds. There are many more amateurs in the first class than in the second. Most beginners cannot or will not feel sufficiently. They can be urged to feel more, and still more, without endangering the play.

We find, as we attempt to give practical advice on this matter, that we are constantly treading on dangerous ground, because of individual characteristics and unusual situations. We cannot, it is apparent, improve on Mr. Calvert's statement. We may suggest without fear of danger that the actor, in private, try to feel the emotions without reference to pattern and the purpose of the scene; for not only will this develop his power to express emotion, it will, at times, help him get into his character. But we would also suggest, with stronger emphasis, that the actor must make oc-

casional mental checks on his emotional display; that he and his director must guard against emotion running wild on the night of the play; and we would state, unconditionally, that eventually emotion must be made subject to a rationality which assigns it its proper place in the play.

There are differences in the ways in which we approach and create characters in farce and comedy, and in tragedy and melodrama. A beginner is frequently troubled when he attempts a characterization in farce or melodrama, because he does not take account of these differences. In consequence, he sometimes gives us a farce characterization in a comedy or a comedy characterization in a farce.

Repeatedly we find that we are able to make our point clearer by comparing the work of acting to that of drawing and painting. The artist who draws a sketch of a public man for a news story, reproduces the man so that the picture in the paper or magazine will convey to us some of the things which a photograph conveys; but the caricaturist who sketches the same public man for *Life* or *Judge*, exaggerates certain features or characteristics for comic effect. Both base their pictures on actual appearance, but the caricaturist goes beyond reality. If the public man has a long, sharp nose, the first artist will be careful not to give the nose undue emphasis for fear of making his subject appear ridiculous; the caricaturist,

Comed

Farce

however, will draw the nose even longer and sharper than it really is, and so will give the face an absurd appearance; for he is aware that an exaggerated nose, or an exaggeration of any other feature, appeals to our sense of humor.

The actor's task in character drawing in farce corresponds to the task of the caricaturist; when he plays comedy, his viewpoint is that of the artist who draws his sketch for the paper.

If he has discovered that he can apply the test of reality to the play, he knows that he is to play comedy; therefore he will not pitch his voice too high nor make it unnaturally thin; he will not adopt a walk which is absurd or use gestures which are made naturally only by people with defective muscular control. He will make his characterization a sketch or a full portrait which represents accurately a character in actual life.

If, however, he discovers that the play is a farce and his character is improbable, he will become a caricaturist. He will dress and behave in a manner which emphasizes strongly certain points in voice, or points in gesture and movement, or points in mental traits; he will exaggerate these points for comic effect. In both cases we start with reality; but in farce the actor puts his tongue in his cheek and goes beyond the limits of reality in his character drawing.

For most amateurs (there are occasional excep-

tions) good comedy characterization is easier than good farce characterization. Even though the beginner tends to exaggerate when acting, even though there seems to be a natural affinity between the amateur and the farce viewpoint, the fact remains that a good farce characterization is rarer than a good comedy characterization. In farce the actor is in danger of letting the audience know he is trying to be funny, and when he does this, much of the humor is lost. Unless the amateur has a native gift for farce, the successful acting of this type of play calls for a discretion, subtlety, technique, and experience beyond that called for by comedy.

Somewhat the same differences are found in playing tragedy and melodrama. In melodrama we change our viewpoint from the one we adopted for farce. Instead of emphasizing the comic and ridiculous, we exaggerate our character and his voice and action in a manner which will emphasize the serious or the thrilling. As with farce, we start with reality and exaggerate beyond reality; but in this case we stress certain features and qualities which make our character better or worse, more noble or ignoble than we find in life. We give our villain a despicable nature, a scowl, a harsh voice, a swagger, a cruelty beyond reality; we give our heroine a pathetic voice, a tearful eye, a long-suffering nature which will elicit great sympathy from the

audience. In melodrama we are striving for a caricature which will be theatrically effective; we are not striving for honest portraiture.

The amateur is not always successful with his melodramatic characterization, for here again there is a demand for technique, for the simulation of emotion which he cannot supply. Observation leads us to believe, however, that melodramatic characterization is not so difficult of interpretation as farce characterization.

(B) PROBLEMS OF SPEECH

As the public reader develops his voice and its speech, he usually applies what he has learned to normal speech. This is natural. Normal speech, however, is not the speech of the modern stage. On the stage the speech is not uttered under normal conditions, but under unusual, often very dramatic conditions; and the voice itself is frequently not the ordinary voice of the speaker but that of his character.

The varying circumstances, the varying conditions found in plays, make any practical rules for stage speech out of the question. A text is of very little value here. Stage speech and speech problems are best handled in the laboratory of the rehearsal room. The most we shall attempt to do is

to enumerate a few of the questions and recommend ways which may lead towards their solution.

One group of problems which is troublesome to the beginner but which should disappear with experience, is the group centering around vocal interpretation. If the actor understands motivation and can find it, and if his active thinking, as he speaks his lines, is the thought of the character, and not his own, interpretation problems tend to disappear. Finding motivation and thinking in character are, however, very difficult; and it may be helpful to look at two interpretation problems.

The first concerns the question of speech entity. The actor ought to learn to think of a speech not as a unit, an entity, but either as several entities or as only a part of an entity. A speech is only rarely a unit in thought and mood.

Galsworthy begins his little play *The Sun*² as follows:

The Girl: God knows what 'e'll say, Jim.

The Man: Let 'im. 'E's come too late, that's all.

The Girl: 'E couldn't come before. I'm frightened. 'E was fond of me.

The Man: And aren't I fond of you? My Gawd!

The Girl: I ought to 'a' waited, Jim; with 'im in the army.

If we think in character, sense the mood of each

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character, and apply what we know about motivation, we find that we have here five entities, but they do not correspond to the five speeches of the two characters. Our division will be like this:

God knows what 'e'll say, Jim. Let 'im.

'E's come too late, that's all. 'E couldn't come before.

I'm frightened.

'E was fond of me. And aren't I fond of you? My Gawd!

I ought to 'a' waited, Jim; with 'im in the army.

Later, when the girl's old lover, the Soldier, comes into the scene, he has this speech:

Soldier: So I 'ave. My Gawd! It's a way they 'ave in the Army. I said when I got out of it I'd laugh. Like the sun itself. I used to think of you, Daise, when the crumps was comin' over, and the wind was up. D'you remember that last night in the woods? "Come back and marry me quick, Jack!" Well, 'ere I am—got me pass to 'eaven. No more fightin' an' trampin', no more sleepin' rough. We can get married now, Daise. We can live soft an' 'appy. Give us a kiss, old pretty.

A brief analysis of this speech discloses several thought units leading easily from one to another, and several moods, a mood in one instance growing out of the preceding, and in another instance appearing abruptly.

Realistic dialogue copies and sharpens the dia-

logue of life and we know, if we pause and think a moment, that often the speeches of two or even more speakers make up a thought or mood entity; and that often in one speech by a single speaker there are several entities, arising from different ideas or emotions, separated by pauses, and spoken differently. Better than trying to learn rules or studying texts, better than seeking the advice of a teacher or director, is to listen carefully to actual conversation for a period of one week. The actor can learn more about interpretation in that week than he can learn in a year in the library or the rehearsal room.

A director soon discovers that different amateurs have different ideas about what interpretation means. Interpretation seems to mean this to one and that to another according to the actor's previous speech training or to certain ideas about speech which he has, in some way, acquired.

For example, there is the interpretation which is based on form. The actor has studied rules about phrasing and pausing, about grouping the verb with the subject or object, about falling inflection preceding a pause; and he speaks his lines, consciously or unconsciously, in accordance with the rules of speech, paying attention to little else.

When form is the center of speech, when speech contains little or nothing except form, we have a pleasing vocal effect and that is about all.

Another interpretation is the mental interpretation. The actor has studied his lines for their meaning; he knows the thought expressed by the preceding speaker, from which his speech is derived; he knows the content of his own speech and towards whom it is directed; and he is able to give a clear, understandable interpretation, one which leaves in the minds of the audience no doubt about the thought he means to convey. Such an interpretation is still incomplete and does not elicit the desired response from the audience.

The interpretation he should strive for is the dramatic. This interpretation is not a rhetorical interpretation, an interpretation in terms of form; it is not a mental interpretation, one which is merely clear as to content; it is a compound of these and something more. The dramatic interpretation is one in which form is recognized as helpful (because if wrong vocal form is employed a wrong meaning may be conveyed); it is one in which the content is clear; but the dramatic interpretation has its roots in character, it grows from character, and from character which is in a definite mental, and especially a definite emotional, state.

After all, what we desire is a reaction in our audience. Form elicits little or no reaction from the average theatre goer. A mental interpretation does not secure an emotional response. It is only when the actor, thinking and feeling in character, pro-

jects the emotional as well as the mental content of the speech, that the desired reaction comes. It is apparent, then, that the problems of interpretation, as well as many other of the minor problems in acting, carry us back to our major problem of characterization and to a consideration of the question of motivation.

A distinct speech problem which is at times very disturbing in our modern realistic drama, is the problem of dialect. Our English, and especially our American plays, are filled with foreign characters who speak our language or the dialect of our language to which we are accustomed, imperfectly; and with English or American characters who speak the dialect of a section of the countries with which we are not well acquainted. We have the broken English of the Norwegian, the German, Frenchman, Italian, and many others; we have the Scotch, Lancashire, Cockney, and Irish dialects of Great Britain, and the New York, New England, Southern, and Middle West dialects of America. Since the dramatists write these characters, the actors have to play them; and from our experience we know that amateurs have difficulty in playing them convincingly.

Perhaps a good piece of advice would be to dispense with dialect whenever it can be done without injury to the play. But often dialect is essential. The actor usually needs help with his handling of

dialect. Yet, we feel that it is almost impossible to say anything which will be of practical help in this dialect problem.

Different nationalities, and groups in different localities of the same country, give different values to sounds. This being true, it might be possible to make a chart or diagram showing the values of sounds among the various nationalities and groups. For instance, we could set down the long "i" sound of the Irish as having the same sound value as "oi" does for us. We might set down the sounds which are characteristic of the German language, and recognizing that the German who tries to speak English is influenced by his native sounds, we know that he will speak with a combination of German and English sounds, the combination varying according to the speaker's familiarity with English and his ear for sound.

But such a chart would be only the beginning, the primer for our study of dialect. An actor may know the sounds and speak them perfectly and still not give us a convincing dialect. This is because in every language we find a different speech tune. The tune may or may not be musical, it may or may not be obvious, but the tune and its rhythm are there.

Let us try to make clear something of what we are talking about. From the standpoints of our own language and our own ears, the Irish dialect seems to be rhythmic in a musical sense; it has

more rhythm, more curves than the English; it has a continuous, related movement, it is, in a sense, lyric and legato. The Italian dialect also sounds to us as musically rhythmic, flowing, but it is rapid and staccato. The Swedish does not sound musically rhythmic; it is not curved; the tune seems to be broken; there is the pause and the staccato note.

Such elementary knowledge of speech tunes cannot, as we have said, be very helpful; and an attempt to chart these tunes or in some way put them on paper would be a desperate undertaking. A treatise on dialect which would prove useful would be endless. A recent writer, Elizabeth Avery, in writing on phonetics says: "The phonetician can explain to the French student that in English the accent depends chiefly on stress, instead of on pitch; that in place of being relatively even and smooth, it is vigorous and jerky; so that, for instance, he must form the habit of saying 'university' with the force all concentrated on the *ver*, not 'université' with an even flow of tone and a slight singing rise on the *te*." Here is just one point among the thousands which would have to be made clear.

After all, the actor's ability to become a convincing dialect actor does not depend so much on his knowledge of sound values and the qualities of speech tunes. The dialect actor must possess a good mimicry sense and a good sense of rhythm,—

a keenness for detecting speech tunes when he hears them; and having these qualities, there appear at present only two ways in which he may learn dialects. The best way is to go straight to the source and listen to the dialect as spoken naturally by a German, Irishman, or Bostonian; if this is impractical, he may learn something of the dialect from someone who knows it and speaks it convincingly.

The significance of the pause in speech is usually not understood by the beginner. He runs merrily on in his speech with never a pause save for breath. The actor should understand that speech which flows along as though paced by a metronome will grow monotonous and cannot have emphasis. Inattention to the dramatic value of the pause is often responsible for ineffective, undramatic reading of lines. Let the actor learn that silence is speech in drama.

The pause is useful in many ways. It gives emphasis to a mental idea as in the speech: "Why, you have been gone . . . eighteen years." When playing comedy, a pause just before the comedy idea in a speech, sometimes gives comic value to the speech. A wife, trying to catch her husband, asks: "Was this woman a blonde or a brunette?" The husband replies: "She was a—" he pauses, looks for help from his friend and finishes, "a blonde." It provides a moment of relief and relaxation in

a scene which has proceeded breathlessly for some time. It may register thought as in: "It must have been twelve o'clock. . . . The streets were deserted then. . . . You would not have been seen by anyone." It may emphasize and heighten emotion, as when a man says softly: "I need you" and a woman replies: "You . . . need me?" It marks the transition from one mood to another and from one thought entity to another. It may be accompanied by movement or may stand by itself as a hush which forecasts a dramatic speech or movement. Bosworth in his *Technique in Dramatic Art* gives us several good illustrations of the use of the pause, one which is especially applicable to our last statement. A son has returned. The mother rushes to him and asks through her tears: "My boy, why did you not write? We thought that you were dead. Where have you been?" The reply is not casual. It is startling and dramatic; the audience needs preparation for it. So the son pauses, then replies: "In prison."

If the reader will read aloud the speeches we have quoted, first with and then without the pauses, he cannot help feeling the dramatic power of the pause which we have been trying to make clear.

Two warnings may be given in regard to the pause. During the pause the play must not drop. The tensivity of feeling must be sustained, the concentration on the idea must not falter. Second,

though we may work out the position and length of the pause mentally, though we may rehearse the pause until it is effective, this does not lessen the actor's responsibility. He should not wait for direction each time. He should understand the value of the pause and let his audience-sense have something to say about the use of it. He should think about its use until its use becomes second nature to him.

Many other speech problems might be discussed. Since most of these are taken up in the various books on speech, we shall mention only one more and shall touch upon it very briefly.

Speech in drama is not normal speech. We have said this before but we have not discussed it. As a mother, waiting in sorrow for the return of her wayward daughter, does not, in actual life, speak normally, neither does the actress who plays the mother on the stage. As an old farmer, greatly amused by a funny story, unconsciously changes his voice because of his emotion, so must the actor who plays the farmer change his voice from the normal. A person placed in an emotional situation and roused emotionally is affected vocally; and emotion breaks down all the rules for ordinary speech. A specific voice is required for a specific character under a specific emotion. We can offer no advice here except to say that the voice should be in harmony with the emotion and the character.

(C) PROBLEMS OF MOVEMENT

“The secret of gesture in acting lies in the fact that there is no movement and no part of any movement that means anything in itself, but only as it ensues from what has gone before and proceeds into what comes after.”

Though Stark Young leads from this statement into a discussion different from ours, we may use it as a starting point for our examination of movement. We would emphasize that movement be constructive in that it proceeds from character and leads into the drama which follows. Gesture and movement are not ends in themselves. A walk, an arm gesture, a head movement,—these should be expressive, should add to our understanding or intensify our emotions. Again, we would submit that the actor’s movement be selective. Though the right movement may be the result of a moment of inspiration, it is more often the result of conscious thought. Selection dictates that the actor *think out* gesture and movement which are constructive, fresh, and dramatic. We begin to think of gesture as we work into characterization; we select our gesture when we put our character into the specific action of the play.

Some actors walk about, gesticulate, move their bodies, and all is commonplace and trite and undramatic; others move a hand or turn the head

slightly and a mind and spirit are revealed in the movement. Let us look at several examples of movement which are or are not constructive and selective.

An amateur actor, playing Mr. Peters in *Trifles*, kept looking from Hale to the other characters during Hale's long narration of the discovery of the murder, kept nodding his head in affirmation and understanding throughout the story. His instinct may have been towards the constructive but his movement was not selective. It was trite, amateurish, and distracting.

Another amateur, playing Dick Dudgeon in *The Devil's Disciple*, slumped in his chair throughout the trial scene, spread out his legs, gesticulated in a blasé fashion; and while his movements may have been selective, they were not entertaining and dramatic, they did not proceed from character or lead us into what was to follow. They were not constructive.

An actress playing Lizzia in the opening pantomime scene in *Boccaccio's Untold Tale*, crossed the stage four or five times while she was on the stage alone before Violante entered. Her crossings were neither constructive nor selective; they were not effective, nor calculated to interest the audience.

On the other hand, in a production of *The Maker of Dreams*, at the place where Pierrot be-

gins to compose a new song, he leaped to the table and Pierrette seated herself on the floor, in the position of an audience, below him. The action was fresh, suggestive, and in keeping with the characters and the play.

In a production of *Candida*, during one of Morell's lengthy moral tirades, Marchbanks lay on the couch hidden from the audience save for one hand which hung over the edge. With the movement of this hand Marchbanks suggested irritation, boredom, resignation. The movement was effective and constructive.

In *The Bank Account*, just at the moment when the revelation came to Frank Benson, the clerk, that his wife had taken out all the money he thought he had in the bank, the actor playing Frank remained perfectly motionless save for his right hand (a hand which had been given importance in the play before). This hand, cramped and slightly deformed, was extended, and twitched slightly. The movement was constructive, well selected, and dramatic.

The amateur sometimes finds stretches in the play in which he "has nothing to do." Let him not be deceived. If he has "nothing to do," he must fill in this period of doing nothing effectively.

Let us explain this seeming paradox. When an actor has nothing to do, that is, when he has no lines to speak and no definite action, he will actu-

ally do one of two things: efface himself from the play and attend to matters irrelevant or disturbing to the scene,—that is, *do something* which has no bearing on the play; or, remain still, listening to the dialogue and concentrating on the scene,—that is, while doing nothing he will still be in and of the play. Since the actor, whether he wills to or not, cannot have a neutral effect when on the stage, he is either a distracting or a contributing element in the play during these periods. He must, then, keep in mind that the play is going on and that he is still a part of the play, even though he is not speaking or moving about; he must remember that even if he has no lines to speak, he must not drop out of the scene; he should coöperate with those who are carrying forward the action and help to focus attention on them.

Louis Calvert, in *Problems of the Actor* to which we have referred before, uses the expression “the art of doing nothing.” It is an apt, arresting expression. We can find much of value in Calvert’s discussion of the subject and can do no better than quote from him: ³

“The power of listening to the speech of another in such a way that the audience are coaxed to listen also, is one of the most direct means by which we are able to burn the simple, prosaic facts of the

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play into the minds of the audience; and it is a supremely important branch of the actor's craft."

And again: "Of course it would be stupid and presumptuous to lay down any hard and fast rules in a matter which depends so much on the various requirements of the various parts. In most cases we may achieve an end by remaining perfectly still with our eyes fixed on the speaker, thus focusing attention on him; sometimes it is better to obliterate ourselves from the scene entirely; again it is the listener who gives real point and drive to the other's speech, he may convey to the audience by his expression of horror or pity the depths of the suffering through which the other is passing; and how often a line 'gets a laugh,' not because it is given in a clever way by the actor who speaks it, but because of the way it is received by the listener."

In truth, then, the actor, while he is on the stage, rarely has nothing to do. In those stretches during which he does not speak or move, he is still in the play. The period of apparent inactivity must be thought out as carefully as—perhaps more carefully than—the periods during which he is moving about and speaking. The period can have purpose, can be made constructive, the actor should make it effective in a manner which his character and the particular scene demand. Doing nothing purposefully and effectively is difficult, but it often dis-

tinguishes a promising amateur actor from an unpromising one.

(D) PROBLEMS OF THE DRAMATIC

We shall group here a number of problems which concern the dramatic element of the play; that is, points which have to do with the creation and projection of that subtle but unmistakable power which holds us and leads us on in the acted play. Again, we cannot take up all the problems which may arise; we can only touch upon a few which are among the most common.

If our memories are not at fault, it was William Gillette who first brought attention to the phrase "the illusion of the first time." Surely no phrase is more expressive of that problem which confronts the actor when he essays to give reality and spontaneity to that which he has rehearsed to the point of monotony; when, knowing exactly what he is going to say and do, he seeks to behave as though he did not know.

The actor knows what is coming next. He knows that in half a minute he is to step leisurely to the door, there to be surprised by his dreaded enemy who will shoot him dead. Yet, he must be casual, must laugh light-heartedly, as though he were not aware that something unusual is about to happen.

The question of preserving the illusion of the

first time, of behaving as though the scene had never been rehearsed, is not as difficult as it is interesting. Even the beginner is usually able to fall naturally into this rehearsed make-believe, and more times than not he is able, without any conscious effort on his part, to preserve this illusion. Some amateurs, however, frequently destroy this illusion by showing the audience that they are anticipating the action or speech which is to follow.

A girl whose business it is suddenly to sit impulsively upon a cushion at the foot of a couch, begins edging towards the couch and seems upon the point of sitting for several seconds before her impulse to sit should come. A man is roused to anger by the last words of another's speech, but he registers anger before anything has been said to make him angry. The actor referred to in a previous paragraph, instead of walking casually towards the door, prepares himself physically and emotionally for the shot which he should pretend he does not know is to be fired. In each case, the illusion of the first time is disturbed.

The advice we have to offer on this point is very simple. It is: do not let the audience see you anticipate, do not betray what is about to happen. Ordinarily there must be some mental anticipation; but this should not show in the actor's face, nor should it be carried as far as any physical manifestation, any show of the emotions. The ability to

keep the audience from all knowledge of anticipation depends upon the actor's keeping his mind on the play and keeping control of himself. Certainly if he has any acting instinct at all, he will be able to break himself of the habit of visible anticipation.

Somebody has said that all great art is obvious; that is, that the meaning should be understandable, the effect should be readily felt. In respect to acting, we would say that the meaning of a speech, the effect of a movement or a series of movements, should be readily seen and understood; but the means which are employed to gain this should not be so obvious.

In a painting, the artist does not have to be so careful of the way in which he employs his mediums. If he secures an harmonious color combination and a beautiful effect, we are satisfied, for the color combination is not created before our eyes but in the privacy of his studio. On the stage the effect is created right before our eyes; and if the means used to create the effect are too obvious, the dramatic element will be weakened.

If an actor wears spats, toys with a monocle, swings a cane, and sits on the edge of the table, we gather that he is trying to create the effect of a blasé man-about-town. The means he uses to create this effect are too obvious. They do not satisfy us, they do not even interest us. There is little inven-

tiveness in the means he uses to gain his effect; he does those things which, because of their repetition, we have come first to expect and then to dread. His means, therefore, do not give us much dramatic pleasure.

The use of obvious means for securing an effect embraces the way in which we dress, behave, speak our lines. Obvious means are those which have been used over and over in the theatre, which are employed because some other actor has employed them, which have lost their freshness.

Our pleasure in the theatre is not increased when the actor uses as means towards creating the effect of an old man, trembling hands, shuffling feet, and a quavering voice,—especially if these are the only means he uses. We cannot employ the old tricks over and over and still hope for them to be effective.

“What, then,” the actor asks, “are we to do?” We must not let our memory carry us back to some old man we have seen on the stage. We must not imitate some actor who has played an old man. We must go to the character we are playing, and if he is a well drawn character, he will not be a plagiarism on some other “stage” old man. After we understand him, we must realize him in life. Life is the great source, not previous stage performances. Some old men do not shuffle their feet, neither do their hands tremble nor their voices quaver; and

yet, they are old men, and could not, for the life of them, pass for men of thirty. We should find and interpret their inner character; we should let it dictate some of the means.

We would make the same recommendation for dramatic action that we make for character: the means towards an effect should not be obvious. Stark Young, in his stimulating book *Theatre Practice*, writes:⁴ "In *Mala Gloria* the hero comes home from prison and a bandit's life to find that his wife has betrayed him for the young son of the house where she is employed as a maid. He kills her and departs again. What Grasso did when he acted the rôle was to kill the woman and then, instead of going straight out of the room, to turn on the young man, to turn madly, pause, catch his hand on the boy's head, kiss his brow suddenly, and spin blindly from him; as you might treat a child who without knowing it has ruined your life."

Now as Mr. Young says, this was great imaginative acting; it was full of human significance. But it makes our own point more clear. The effect was there, but the means used in reaching the effect were not hackneyed, not obvious. An amateur actor cannot hope to reach the heights attained by the great Sicilian, Grasso, but he can avoid the hackneyed gestures and movements which, in the

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non-professional theatre, are so often employed to suggest the effect of gladness or fear or surprise or some other emotion.

We could write much more on the subject of obvious means and their tendency to weaken the dramatic; but if we have made our contention convincing, the actor should be able to apply the general principle to his specific work.

Though it was not always so, there is now a definite principle of climax operative in the acted play. This principle prescribes that the emotion shall not be on a dead level of interest, and that the strongest ideas and emotions, the highest points, shall come near the end; and the principle is not only applicable to the play as a whole, but to acts, scenes, even to speeches of any length.

The idea of climax carries with it the requirement that we start at a level some distance below the high point and work up to it; and the further requirement that we descend from the high point to a more normal level. We may think of a play, then, as a series of waves, increasing in height and power through two-thirds or three-fourths of the drama, then decreasing in size towards the end. The principle of climax has a logical basis in life, and a psychological basis in the way the minds of the audience operate. The principle of climax is easily comprehended, its importance in the play is easily understood; but very frequently amateurs

pay no attention to it in their work. They start the scene at such a high pitch that they cannot rise to a climax, or if they do, they tire an audience out in their effort; again, they proceed on a dead level without any feeling for the climax of a scene or act; or, they wear themselves out during the first part of the act, and the climatic part is on a lower level than the parts which preceded it.

Climax is essential and it demands attention; and it asks for no super-intelligence or super-ability on the part of the actor. It requires little more than a comprehension of where the high points are located, and care in the intensity of voice, emotion, and action employed, so that the play may rise in power to the climaxes.

However, climax is dependent upon one other thing: coöperation. One actor cannot reach the climax and give to it its full significance if the rest of the cast is hanging back or loafing. There must be coöordinated effort; there must be team work.

A point which we would stress here is the importance of coöperation as a means towards the creation and projection of the dramatic in the acted play. When a scene is flat and lifeless, the cause is ordinarily to be discovered in a lack of concentration on the definite emotional progress which the scene demands, or in a lack of coöperation. An actor does not work alone. He takes his cue from a preceding speech and his own speech

leads into the speech which follows. Acting is not merely individual; it is a social art. Actors must assist one another, must listen to, react to, play up to one another. If the tenseness drops, if the connection is lost, if the flow of the scene is absent, let the actor examine his own work to discover whether or not he is coöperating with his fellow actors.

We have all heard actors make such remarks as: "Why, the audience took the scene between Mary and David seriously when we meant it to be funny!" or: "They laughed two or three times during our scene when there wasn't anything to laugh at." The actors are trying, though perhaps unconsciously, to excuse themselves and blame the audience. What they are actually admitting is: "Our tone was not harmonious, we didn't project the atmosphere of the play so that the audience felt it and surrendered to it."

Every first-rate play has a dominating mood; every acted play should have a particular emotional appeal to which all others are subordinate; every play should contain a definite pervading and surrounding atmosphere. The audience must be led into this atmosphere if the play is to make the appeal the dramatist meant it to make, and for this to happen, the actor must know the atmosphere and live in it.

This dominating mood or atmosphere may be one of stark tragedy, or superstitious awe or gloom

or depression or whimsy or good humor ; but whatever it is, it must be clearly understood by the actors. There should never be any uncertainty about the mood ; and there should be no mixing of atmosphere, no clashes, no discords. If these things exist, no unified effect can be produced upon the audience and it may laugh when it should not or remain unmoved when it should be moved.

J. M. Barrie's *Twelve Pound Look* is a whimsical character comedy ; when played in the mood of farce, there is so much discord between the acting and the kind of humor in the dialogue, that much of the pleasure in the play is lost. On the other hand, Percival Wilde's *A Noble Lord*, played in the spirit of straight comedy, would not be very funny ; this play requires broad farcical treatment. A supernatural atmosphere pervades *Will-o'-the-Wisp* ; if it is acted realistically it is flat or incongruous. In *Moondown*, a little play which concerns two shop girls, the story as unfolded relates how one who is lonely, hungry, and without work, is driven to the point of despair because of the failure of her lover to come to her. Pathos is the dominant tone of the play. But,—the other girl is cynical, light-hearted ; and if she is out of key, if she does not tone her speeches to the pathos of the play, if she plays comedy (which she is tempted to do), and dominates the scene with her comedy, the little drama becomes nasty and sordid.

Someone must establish the spirit, the mood of the play. Presumably the person to do this is the director. But once the atmosphere is decided upon, it is the duty of each actor to put himself into the atmosphere, to coöperate in giving an harmonious mood to the play and in projecting the appeal of this mood to the audience.

(E) A PROBLEM OF THE AUDIENCE

In our discussion of the theatrical sense in an earlier chapter, we spoke of a problem of the audience,—a problem which arises when the actor gauges his work by the “feel” of the audience which comes to him over the footlights.

Crowd psychology, which is operative in the theatre, creates another problem for the actor. Crowd psychology designates that an audience is more naïve, less civilized and intelligent than are individual members of the audience outside the theatre. The actor must realize this fact and prepare for it, otherwise he may receive many unpleasant surprises. (A very good discussion of audience psychology is included in Clayton Hamilton's *A Theory of the Theatre*.)

We wish to take up only one problem here: the problem of whether an actor should remember or forget about his audience during a performance. We are not referring now to the “feel” an actor

has for his audience, but to conscious thinking about his audience as he plays.

In a previous book on play production ⁵ we discussed this problem. A paraphrase of this discussion is as follows:

Our aim, when acting, is to produce an emotional response in our audience. Now this response may be aroused by our becoming emotionalized and projecting something of our condition across the footlights, or it may be aroused by the thoughts and ideas in our speeches and the manner of our delivery. The first case is usually found in serious plays, the second in comedies. If the actor is arousing the audience through his emotionalized self, he not only needs his conscious mind to serve as warden of his emotions, but he needs to dismiss the audience from his thoughts so that his emotion will ring true and his characterization be wholly convincing; but if he is arousing them through lines and delivery, a task which calls for greater attention to pause, inflection, stress,—in other words, for a technical handling which cannot be determined before he goes on the stage,—then he should keep his audience in mind in order to ascertain, at any moment, how his lines and action are getting over. In both instances he is sensitive to his audience, but in the second he is not only sensitive,

⁵ *The Process of Play Production*, Allen Crafton and Jessica Royer.

but is consciously in touch with it. In serious plays the interest is cumulative and calls for but little expression or interruption on the part of the audience, save in the climactic moments; in comedy the expression of interest is constant. In serious plays the response is not so audible as in comedy in which the actor has to be ready for interruptions in his lines and business.

We can make, then, something of a general summary of this matter of remembering and forgetting an audience. The more likely a play is to be interrupted by an audience, the more the actor should have the audience consciously on his mind. Again, the more the playing of a part becomes a matter of directing and pointing lines, of gauging action by the response of an audience, the more an actor should keep his mind on the audience. On the other hand, when he is playing an emotional scene, or when his characterization is difficult and must carry conviction, or when the success of the play does not depend upon audible outbursts from the audience, then he can use his mind as a conscious guard over his emotions and think little about his audience. It is understood that these are general statements and must admit of exceptions.

(F) PROBLEMS ARISING FROM STAGECRAFT

It may appear by this time that if an amateur has to solve all the problems we have mentioned be-

fore he can appear in a play (and the end does not seem to be yet in sight), then the sensible thing is to give up all hope and select some easier, simpler occupation such as designing sky-scrapers or composing symphonies. Let him be comforted. All of these problems do not arise in the same play or at the same time; and no single actor is ever concerned with all of them. If he has any of the actor's instincts and abilities, he will find that he need not be worried over some of them.

When we come to the difficulties arising from stagecraft, we come to problems which do not appear until the last rehearsals when, it is to be hoped, all other problems will have been satisfactorily solved.

We said in the first chapter that much emphasis has been given stagecraft on the modern stage. Scenery, lighting, costuming, have assumed great importance,—perhaps undue importance. If the lighting is such that it handicaps the actor in his movement and expression, if the costumes are uncomfortable and prevent the freedom of movement which the actor feels he must have, if the arrangement of scenery and properties is such that his difficulties of action and projection are greatly increased,—that is, if the stage staff has gone merrily ahead without any consideration for the actor, then it is his duty to rebel and become a very dis-

agreeable person, if necessary, in order that he may have freedom to meet the demands which the play makes of him.

The functions of stagecraft are to furnish an environment for the actors and to express the mood of the play. If the scenery or costumes are so striking or ingenious or blazing that the attention of the audience is repeatedly diverted from the actors, then they are wrong. If the scenery and lights suggest a mood which is different from the mood which the actors are striving for, then there should be a conference, and the mood of the play decided upon; for the effect of each may be lost if there is discord and clash in mood between the stage decorators and the actors.

Louis Calvert gives us an account of a display of stagecraft at the expense of the actors. He says: "I saw this painfully demonstrated in a Shakesperian play on Broadway not many months ago. . . . I went to the theatre in high hopes of seeing a memorable performance. But I was keenly disappointed. The really splendid acting of the company was swamped by the astounding scenery. In one of the scenes most of the acting was done on a peculiar bridge which somehow gave the impression of being miles distant up the stage. The dramatic effect of the lines spoken from this strange perch can be imagined. . . . Still another scene

was ruined because the light at the back of the stage was so brilliant that the actors' faces were silhouetted against it in shadow. All facial play was out of the question. It is easy to imagine what became of Shakespere's lines." ⁶

The actor ought to know what the scenery is before the time of dress rehearsal; he ought to work with the furniture and properties he is to use; if they are to be out of the ordinary, he ought to wear his costumes; and he ought to go through the scenes with the lighting that is to be used on the night of the play, if the lighting promises any difficulties. When the actor has to contend with a number of stagecraft handicaps at a time when he is nervously keyed up, he is not to be blamed if he flies off the handle and expresses his indignation in plain language.

So, we say, the actor is sometimes justified in rebelling. If, by his rebellion, he is able to win his point and secure changes which will give the play and his acting a better chance, well and good; the play will probably be more satisfactory to the audience because he has won. But if he does not win, and if the night of the performance is almost at hand, then the only thing he can do is make the best of a bad situation.

It will do no good to fight scenery or properties

⁶ From *Problems of the Actor*, copyrighted by Henry Holt and Company. Used by permission.

or lights on the night of the performance. If a great dark shadow falls on the right of the stage where the actor has been accustomed to stand during an important piece of action, it will do no good if he is stubborn now and stands there, scarcely visible to the audience. In all probability he, and not the stage director, will be held responsible if he cannot be seen. So, when properties, costumes, lighting, and scenery are complete, he must coöperate with his fellow workers and do his best to put across the play.

Even if the time is short and the arrangement does not suit him, he should do his utmost to understand the lighting and should take stage positions which, in the important scenes, do not hide his face and its expression; he should know where doors and windows are to be placed and should be sure of his movements whenever they concern the scenery; he should wear his costumes until they are comfortable and until he has lost his dress consciousness; he should rehearse at least once with the exact properties and furniture which are to be used.

Most of the actor's problems can and should be met before the last trying days of rehearsal. The problems arising from stagecraft can be anticipated by the director who should, as far as possible, prepare his actors to meet them. When the actors' needs are not recognized by the director

and are disregarded by the stage staff, he must demand his rights not only for his own sake and the sake of the play, but because in so doing he will hasten the time when actors will be given the consideration which is their due.

CHAPTER VI

PREPARING THE PART FOR THE STAGE: A SUMMARY OF THE PROCESS

THROUGHOUT the preceding chapters we have brought to the mind of the reader many subjects which concern the process of acting, or more exactly, perhaps, the process of learning to act. If the beginning actor, having discovered all the preparation work necessary to acting, and having learned of all the problems he must face, is now confused and discouraged and feels ready to cast aside all advice and go his own way, let him be cautioned: the greatest actors have had to learn that technique must take the place of instinct, and many actors both of the present and the past have taken lessons from dramatic teachers and have accepted their advice. Halliam Bosworth points out: "There have been many prominent artists who, though not greatly endowed by nature, have, through thorough study and hard work in the technical principles, accomplished much." Talma, the great French actor, once said that it took twenty years to learn to act; and several modern

actors have declared that Talma was not exaggerating.

If the actor is confused and discouraged, let him still keep a stout heart. We would emphasize again that all the problems we have mentioned do not affect him; he has undoubtedly been given some native endowment. And in the present chapter we shall add no new problems but will attempt to put together those parts of the process of which we have been speaking; we shall try to summarize the process in a way which will make it clearer; we shall endeavor to make the actor feel that although the process is lengthy, it is not so complex as he may have been led to believe.

As we begin, let us assume again that the actor has already done a large part of his preparation work; and that some of his preparation work has not been arduous because nature has endowed him with some initial equipment.

He has already given some thought to his body, and if he has found it undeveloped or unresponsive, he has taken intelligent steps to educate his body and bring it under his control. He has recognized that several bodily qualities, such as poise, grace, and self-command, are valuable to him in his acting. He has perhaps found it necessary to practice walking, sitting, gesticulating. He has studied his body as a channel of expression for different mental and emotional ideas and experiences, and has

sought to make it, in every way, a more effective medium of expression.

He has also given attention to his voice, for he has realized early that a good voice is a prerequisite to acting. He has learned that voice development is dependent upon breathing, relaxation, form, and placement. If his tone has been faulty, he has endeavored to make better tone; if he has had difficulties of speech, he has found exercises which will aid in overcoming them. He has also examined his voice for range, variety, power, and beauty,—those vocal qualities, which are especially useful in stage work. And he has not neglected enunciation, articulation, and pronunciation.

He has recognized the importance of the theatrical sense, and he has discovered to what degree he is sensitive to character, to the stage, and to the audience. He has undoubtedly found to his relief and delight that he is endowed with some of this sense; if he has discovered that it is undeveloped or dormant, he has endeavored, consciously, to make it a useful part of his equipment.

Likewise, he has not remained in ignorance of a number of the elementary principles of stage behavior. Perhaps he has been able to adjust himself instinctively to the stage so that an extensive study of these principles was unnecessary; but if his stage sense and his theatrical imagination have not been helpful in this adjustment, then he has

studied these principles and has tried to make his stage work subject to them.

Occasionally a beginner finds it necessary to spend very little time on the preparation work we have mentioned, for he is well gifted and at home at once on the stage; but in almost every case, be he gifted or not, he has to learn something about characterization. So, we presume, he has studied this problem, and now comprehends that characterization is the biggest single task in modern naturalistic acting. He knows something of what is meant by internal and external characterization; he recognizes that the first step in his actual work is a thorough understanding of the character and that this requires concentrated mental effort; he sees that character, after it is comprehended, should be made real, not by putting it immediately on the stage, but into an actual world among actual people; he knows that there are several ways of trying to identify himself with character, of getting inside his character, and he has experimented with these ways; and he has learned that this character which he hopes to portray and express through his own person and personality, must, lastly, be put into the specific action of the play.

Again, he understands what is meant by motivation and he has found that it plays a very important part during his days and weeks of study, con-

tributing vitally to convincing characterization and to convincing dramatic interpretation. And he knows something of the many other problems of characterization, speech, movement, and of the dramatic which may arise, and of ways to meet them.

In other words, the actor has already prepared himself in his private study, in his classroom work, in the practice plays which his dramatic club has presented. In various ways he has found opportunity for development, and he has made use of the opportunity. Over a long or short period of time he has been gaining knowledge of the job he is to undertake and of ways and means of doing this job; he has prepared himself by giving attention to the tools he is to use; he has put these tools in good condition and has tried them out.

His preparation and promise are such that a director selects him to play a part. The actual work of preparing this part for the stage begins (or should begin) with a reading and discussion of the entire play. Reading a play with its production in mind is not always successfully accomplished by the beginning actor; for in order to do this he has to read attentively, imaginatively, emotionally, and he has to stage the play in his own mind. This requires experience. The director, or someone thoroughly familiar with the play, should read it to the cast; and the reader should be careful to give the

cast the idea of the play, to make clear the tone which is to dominate in the play, and to suggest the different characters.

An actor has to be certain that he knows what it is all about. Let the play be talked over until the cast has a clear idea of its meaning and its characters. (In this connection, Constantin Stanislavsky's speech to the players of the Moscow Art Theatre at the beginning of the work on Maeterlinck's *The Blue Bird*, published in the *Theatre Arts Magazine* for January, 1923, is illuminating.)

This first meeting should be interesting. The actor should find enjoyment in it and take from it valuable information and an eager desire to set to work.

The actor takes a copy of the entire play and begins his private study. He reads and thinks about the author's descriptions of the character and the parenthetical stage directions. He studies the character in the scenes with other characters and in the scenes in which his character, while not appearing, is talked about. He builds up in his mind a conception of the inner and outer character. This again should not be boresome. Even if it is difficult, it should be engaging and stimulating.

We recognize that this conception should be clear in all important points. In order to make it clear the actor must move slowly and must be sure

that he finds the motivation, the reason why the character is as he is and does as he does. The work now, we must grant, tends to become tedious and troublesome. If the character's behavior cannot be understood, then the actor should consult the director, for it will never do for him to try to convince an audience of a character which he does not thoroughly understand.

Now he asks: "What of this character created from the written page and living in the mind? Does he speak and behave as people do in life? Will he stand the test of reality?" The actor is apt to think of the character as existing only *in the play*; he is in danger of making him a stage figure. In order to avoid this, he forgets about the stage, the play, the specific action of the play, and tries to imagine his character as a person existing in an actual world. He gives him an actual social background, he hears him talk and sees him move about among actual people. In this way the character tends to lose in theatricality and gain in reality and human quality.

In some plays, when the character is important and passes through a significant development, when he is highly complex, or when he is not easily realized, it is advisable for the actor to think out a whole biography for him. He will find it helpful to read around his character, to study his environment and the age in which he lives, to visualize him

during the years before he reaches the time of the play; for by so doing he will gain a further understanding of those qualities and characteristics which motivate his behavior in the play.

This work of realizing the character and creating his biography should not be difficult, nor should it demand the expenditure of much time. Creating a biography should be real fun for the actor with imagination.

When the actor completely understands the character, he gives conscious attention to the identification of himself with the character. In most cases he works from the inner to the outer characterization. He becomes identified with the character's mental habits, his spiritual reactions, his emotional expression. The actor's mind and spirit become responsive to those of the character; the actor exchanges his own mind and spirit for those of the character.

The body and voice must also be made responsive. We have suggested ways of approaching this task of identification. Since the actor's voice and body are not always readily responsive, conscious thought must be employed to gain the desired walk, voice, and gesture. The actor seeks to behave visibly and audibly in a way which is in harmony with the inner life of the character.

If ideal conditions ever prevailed, the actor would not need to think of the specific action of the

play and of memorizing until he knows, feels, and can express the character. But ideal conditions never prevail, and certainly not in amateur dramatics. We have been speaking as though the first week or ten days after the reading of the play could be spent by the actor solely in private study of the part. But during these days when he is studying by himself, he is also rehearsing the play, for the first rehearsal is usually called as early as possible after the reading of the play. From the first, then, he is, for an hour or more each day, under the supervision of the director. He is doing one thing for him and another for himself.

There is, however, no clash here. What the director wants done does not break into the actor's other work. During the first week or so, the director is usually interested in getting stage positions worked out and the parts memorized.

We would say a word to the actor about his stage position. The director knows more about where he wants the actors to stand and when he wants them to move than does any single actor. In most cases, the director's word should not be disputed. As he assigns positions, the actor should jot his own down upon the margin of his manuscript. If he does this, he will have to be told but once, and will be able to memorize both his stage directions and lines at the same time.

Memorizing, as we have advised, should be done

carefully. The work of memorizing and of rehearsing stage directions is not much fun; but during these days the actor is working with his character and this, as we have insisted, is interesting and stimulating.

It is to be desired that the work of comprehending and realizing the character and that of doing the routine preliminary work under the supervision of the director, will be completed at about the same time. If this is done, both the director and actor can coöperate in building up the play. In this work, although the authority is in the hands of the director, the actor can be of assistance if he assumes some of the responsibility. (The relationship of actor and director is discussed in Chapter IX.)

There may be further problems of character, of speech, of movement. Certainly there will be problems as director and actors seek to raise the play into the dramatic. If there are character problems, the actor should be able to do much for himself at the suggestion of the director. If there are speech problems, such as questions of speech entities, interpretation, the use of the pause, the actor will try to solve these questions, relying upon the judgment of the director for his success or failure. The actor experiments with selective and constructive movement, again bringing his results to the judgment of the director.

In problems of the dramatic, the director had best be both the initiator and judge. These problems arise late during the rehearsal period,—probably in the third week. The director, looking at the play from a position in the auditorium, sees whether illusion is preserved, whether climax is obtained, whether the play is holding together, whether there is a dominant mood. He makes his suggestion, and the actor, knowing what he is talking about and what to do, profits by the suggestion.

During these days the work is neither individual nor is it between the director and a single actor; it is a coöperative enterprise on the part of the director and all the actors. And during these rehearsals, when the stage business has become fixed and unconscious, when the memorizing has been done and the actor can live in his character, the actor should begin to enjoy himself; he should be able to get a real thrill out of acting.

If the actor is wise, he will do all he can to get his problems solved early. He should have them out of the way several days before the time of the performance so that his mind will not be filled with details and worries, and he can put his whole effort into playing the play. He should take up the problems in order, so that they will not bring about confusion.

He has now been working and rehearsing on his

part for three or four weeks. He still has the problems of make-up and stagecraft before him.

We have said nothing about make-up thus far. Make-up is a part of the actor's work, and he should, as soon as is convenient, learn how to make himself up. We shall devote a later chapter to this subject. As he works on his character, he visualizes his appearance. From his knowledge of make-up, he decides on what he will do to his own face in order to suggest the face of the character. And he finds time to experiment with his make-up before the night of dress rehearsal.

As we have advised, he should try on his costumes and know something about the lights, properties, and scenery which are to be used, as soon as possible. He should insist that certain information be given him, for it is necessary that he should have it. This can best be given him through the director. Let us hope, for his success on the night of the play, that the stagecraft problems will be unimportant.

The actor should go into the dress rehearsals with his part of the job done. He should not have any responsibility at this time save that of doing his best with his part. This responsibility is great enough. For when the curtain rises on the opening night, the director cannot help, or the author; the scene painter's and the property man's work are done; it is the actor who is appearing before the

audience, and has to make use of and interpret the cumulative effort of all these other workers.

The actor should do all he can to be ready for the performance. If the director does not see the advisability of it, the actor should make clear to him why the last dress rehearsal should be held many hours before the performance. Despite all efforts, dress rehearsals are long, depressing, enervating. The actor needs time for recuperation from his weeks of rehearsing and from the laborious dress rehearsals. Forty-eight hours is not too long a time to elapse between the final rehearsal and the performance. This will give the actor opportunity to recuperate physically and to be nervously on edge for the performance. A dress rehearsal on the day of the performance is criminal. An actor cannot do his best work when he is exhausted to the point of using his reserve power.

The actor should go into a performance in good condition, just as an athlete goes into a contest in good condition. An actor should have no worries that can be avoided on this night. He should know just what he is going to do, and he should have rehearsed all that should be rehearsed so that he is uncertain about nothing. His mind should be free for his work of acting and he should get the enjoyment out of playing always realized by the true actor.

The process of acting, then, has an order of

procedure; if one problem follows another in its proper place, confusion will not result. The process contains enough of variety to satisfy anyone. The process builds dramatically in interest and enjoyment.

CHAPTER VII

PREPARING SPECIFIC PARTS FOR THE STAGE

WE have done a great deal of generalizing about character creation and given much abstract information about what should be done by the actor. In this chapter we shall take up several characters in modern drama and discuss the preparation of each of these characters for the stage. It will not be possible to make each study complete, to take each from the first reading of the play to his appearance before an audience: that would involve a discussion of too great length and detail. What we shall do is to outline briefly the process as it applies in each case, treating more fully one or several outstanding points which the particular character brings to mind.

It will also be impossible for us to give the plot of the play in which the character appears. The actor will undoubtedly be familiar with some of the plays; if he is unfamiliar with one of them, he should read it before he tries to understand the preparation of the part.

Our study and interpretation, then, will in each

case be simplified. We shall not be able to mention many minor problems; we have felt it wiser to consider only the more important points in the process as we have discussed it, and to apply these points to definite characterizations, even though we risk the criticism of omitting necessary work.

We have chosen our characters with variety in mind, hoping that each will serve for an exposition of certain points which the others do not.

(A) RUTH HONEYWILL IN *JUSTICE*

In Galsworthy's drama, *Justice*, we have a criticism of the injustice of justice; a condemnation, not of human beings, but of the inability of the law to cope intelligently with a human situation. The story is told dispassionately. All the characters are treated sympathetically, their most grievous faults being their weaknesses. Ruth Honeywill sets the action of the play going; she is the woman for whom Falder falls into crime. She is not so important in what she is as in what she does to another character. During the course of the play her character is not static, but undergoes some change.

First, what does the author tell us about her? She is tall, with black hair and eyes, and an ivory-white, clear-cut face; she is twenty-six years old when we first meet her, is unpretentiously dressed,

and has a natural (not a cultivated) dignity of pose and gesture. As we follow her through the first two acts, Galsworthy tells us that she is stoical, that she walks and speaks quietly, that she is simple in her speech and behavior, has an habitual passivity, is capable of passion, of deep emotion, but is never demonstrative.

In the last act, which takes place two years after Falder's trial and sentence, the author tells us of the changes in her appearance and behavior. As she enters "there seems to be a kind of exultation and excitement behind her habitual passivity." She speaks sardonically; she gives the office boy a honeyed smile; she laughs, she manifests a sudden fierceness, she speaks proudly; she has a not unprosperous appearance. Eventually, as the final tragedy of her lover draws near, she "begins to twist her hands as though prescient of disaster," and at the end she stands absolutely still as though turned to stone.

Second, what do we learn from her speeches? Galsworthy informs us that she speaks in a matter of fact voice and an uncultivated (slightly West Country) accent. We find that all her speeches are short,—the longest being only six lines in length. Always her speech shows her as simple, direct, honest, frank. A bit of the dialogue ¹ dur-

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ing the trial scene is illustrative of these qualities:

Frome: What was the nature of your relations with him?

Ruth: We were friends.

Judge: Friends?

Ruth: (simply) Lovers, sir.

Judge: (sharply) In what sense do you use that word?

Ruth: We love each other.

Judge: Yes, but—

Ruth: (shaking her head) No, your lordship—not yet.

Judge: Not yet! H'm—Well!

If we examine Ruth's speeches of the fourth act, they tell us very little about any change in her character. Only once or twice do we find a speech like this: "(with a laugh) My employer happened then—he's happened ever since." From her speeches we decide that there has been very little fundamental change; thinking of what we have learned from the stage directions, we conclude that only outwardly, only in attitude, has the change taken place.

Third, what of the reaction of the others towards her? The keen prosecuting attorney begins his cross examination of her "in a considerate voice" and asks her only one question. As we read the play, we see that she has the sympathy of everyone; she is always believed; she has Coke-son's support and help, even when he feels that

he is doing wrong in helping her. Cokeson "softens at the look on her face" and promises her that he will speak to the law partners about Falder; and he keeps his word. Though he is orthodox, Cokeson does not condemn her for her way of living.

We find that we have a character that is simple and honest, frank and dignified; a sympathetic character changing into one who is pathetic and tragic in her loneliness. She commands our respect through her utter honesty, she receives our sympathy as she tells of her life with her brute of a husband, our admiration by her behavior at the trial, our deep pity because of the course she has had to follow while Falder is in prison. The character is not complex, not difficult to comprehend. She represents a clear, well-drawn, serious characterization of a sweat-shop worker who seems forced to succumb to an "easier way" of life.

As we grow acquainted with her character, Ruth Honeywill easily becomes a real person; she cannot be anything else to a sensitive actor; she takes herself from the stage to actual life; she lives in life itself. The actress' problem is to identify herself with this very real person. In the achieving of this identification, the creation of a biography will do more than clarify character conception. The contemplation of this woman's past filled with disappointments never complained of, with hard-

ships never resented, with sufferings which brought no outcry; a visualization of this honest, simple, straight-forward girl making the best of the worst, of this poor creature living under a constant repression of emotion, begins to create in the mind and heart of the actress a state which is akin to Ruth's. Add to these things a deep sense of youth unfulfilled, a capacity for happiness never gratified, and the character escapes the dullness of the emotionless.

The projection of this character calls for careful work. The amateur is likely to be contented if she presents the quiet, stoical woman; or, she errs on the other side and, influenced by the tragic mood of the play, she presents a tragedy queen. Either of these creations will fail to convey the Ruth Honeywill who motivates the action of the play.

In trying for her expression of this character, the actress will find it helpful to develop the inner and outer woman at the same time. Restricting the body to quiet, unhurried movement, curtailing all gesture or limiting gesture to a very few small movements, standing perfectly still, cultivating a low voice of short range but with variety within the range,—the rehearsal of these physical characteristics will tend to deepen the sense of the inner character, just as the creation of the inner

will suggest, and aid in securing, the proper visible expression.

The character will become more vivid if the actress speaks in the dialect suggested. Few American amateurs have a working knowledge of "West Country accent," though many can, to some extent, suggest the accent of the Britisher. The actress' use of dialect in this part depends somewhat upon whether the rest of the cast is speaking English or American. If English is spoken, then the actress may be able to suggest the accent of the uncultivated Englishwoman, carefully avoiding the Cockney, however. In doing this she will succeed in presenting a more vivid, convincing Ruth.

It is not an easy matter to take the brief, simple speeches which the author gives Ruth and fill them with meaning; it is doubly difficult when one attempts it in a strange accent and speech rhythm. It may necessitate a repeated dual rehearsal of every line; first, in one's own accent and rhythm to make sure that the line rings true, and then in dialect, studying the expression for the same truth.

The actress who is adept in the matter of facial expression will find the projection of Ruth easier. The amateur needs to be cautioned against an indiscriminate use of this aid. Facial expression must be thought out in its relation to the lines

spoken. That the real Ruth does supplement her meager vocal expression with facial expression, is evidenced by such stage directions as: "narrowing her eyes," "in response to the look on her face." It is this honest, revealing facial expression, coupled with her natural dignity of manner, which gain belief and sympathy for her, even when her words are self-condemning.

The actress' task is not finished when she has succeeded in satisfactorily identifying herself with the character, and when she can present the character of the first two acts convincingly; for in the two years' space of the play's action, much happens to Mrs. Honeywill, and the Ruth of Act IV is not quite the same Ruth we left in Act II.

Believing that she will never see Falder again, certain that she will love no other, Ruth, when life becomes too difficult, takes the one way out which offers her clothes and food for herself and her two small children. In Act IV we see that some of the air of repression is gone with the coming of a little prosperity into her life; but she is pretty much the same as is evidenced by her frankness and honesty and her lack of shame in confessing herself kept by her employer. In manner, in appearance, though, she is different; in her inner character she remains much the same as before. So sure is she of the justification of her course, that she has no regrets save as she sees that her

life must affect Falder's and may once again separate her from all hope of happiness.

There are, then, no outstanding changes in her inner character; the first Ruth is the real Ruth; the changes we note are superimposed upon the character. They find expression in greater freedom of movement and gesture, more freedom in speech, until near the end of the play when pain and hopelessness cause a reversion to the stoicism and repression of the earlier acts. The superimposing of these new attributes on the character will test the technical ability of the actress.

Ruth is a character requiring a careful analysis and calling for the visualization of her background; her interpretation demands more mental than emotional expression and a projection of the inner more than of the outer characterization.

(B) TALIAFERRO IN *EXPRESSING WILLIE*

From an examination of Rachel Crothers' play *Expressing Willie*, we see that it is a comedy which upon several occasions touches farce; yet, the comedy forms the major part of the play, and we may call it a comedy. It is more than a comedy of character or situation; it has the exposition of the idea of "self-expression" as its center. The working out of this idea of self-expression is brought about through a group of egotistical,

false self-expressionists, who, arriving at Willie Smith's Long Island home for a week-end party, are placed in contrast with the genuine, aspiring Minnie Whitcomb and her self-expression; Minnie, accepting the idea which they play with, makes it the real thing in herself.

Taliaferro belongs to the first group, but he understands and appreciates Minnie. He is a bridging character. Like Ruth Honeywill, he is a motivating character. He seems to be now on one side of the thesis and now on the other. While a superficial reading may bring us the idea that Taliaferro is a straight-forward, eccentric comedy character, an examination of the play discloses that he is a complex and important figure. We anticipate that our big tasks are going to be comprehension and motivation.

We shall not enter into a detailed outline of a study of Taliaferro from the author's descriptions, the character's speeches, and the reaction of the other characters to him. It may be necessary, however, to call attention to one or two points. The author's description of Taliaferro is valuable. It tells us: "Taliaferro is about forty, tall, slender, and over elaborate in his grace and flamboyant distinction. His great surety of his own importance and his very nonchalant indifference towards others is amusing and charming rather than disagreeable—since under the pose and the ego are

a very quick sympathy and a warmth of keen appreciation.”²

We already have the key to his character; we could begin our work of interpretation from this description. (Why will not beginning actors read carefully the descriptions and stage directions!) The speeches of Taliaferro verify the author's description. From these speeches and from the comments of the other characters, such as Willie's "He tells the truth to us all," we build up our conception.

From our study we find a man with two natures. We see an egotistical poseur, a windbag who is frank almost to the point of slander, a cold, clever, nervy dilettante. Yet, we also see a man who is quick-witted, honest, who is interesting, even fascinating, who can be sympathetic, understanding, helpful. We discover that there is always a grain of truth in his extravagant speeches as a poseur, and a bit of pose in his honest appreciation.

His importance to the play also becomes clear. He appears as the *raison d'être* for the working out of the plot.

As we set about the work of interpreting this important character, our first problem arises. There are two sides to his nature; in order to move

² This and subsequent quotations are used by permission of the author.

him through the play, we must know which side of his nature is dominant at any time. Motivation becomes important, and we go through the play with the idea of motivation in mind.

Taliaferro comes into the play as his posing self. He is smart and nonchalant. He sees Minnie, the Indiana music teacher, and starts talking to her in his usual clever vein; but he recognizes that she is sincere. He tries her out by talking about greatness and self-expression in his usual flippant manner, and,—Minnie responds sincerely! He sees this, and for a time his attitude changes to one of tenderness and understanding. His words take root. Minnie believes what he says about being real, about letting go and freeing herself. He cannot shake off completely his pose, his delight in what he is doing, but he believes at least something of what he is saying.

The others come: the Cadwaladers and Frances Sylvester, the "psychic," exotic lady who is fishing for Willie's money. Taliaferro immediately becomes one with them in their smartness and shallow chatter. But Minnie is present; she accepts all she sees and hears at its face value. Again Taliaferro confronts her, again he talks with the fire of sincerity burning through his artificial manner. He preaches to her the doctrine that Divine power *is* in us all; that we must believe we can free that power. Perhaps as an experiment with

his own power he asks Minnie to play the piano for them. Minnie consents, stumbles, and falls. Taliaferro joins the others in laughing at her.

We next see our character after dinner engaging in small talk with the others. He is boastful and sophisticated towards Willie and Frances who seem to be falling in love. Minnie enters, resolved to play for them. George Cadwalader exclaims: "Good! She's had a drink." Taliaferro resents this remark and retorts with sincerity: "No! You don't understand." He urges her on and she plays—beautifully! He has, in truth, released something in her. The party is amazed,—all except Taliaferro. He tells her calmly: "You have destroyed the things which were destroying you."

But immediately he is won back to the mood of the others; he forgets Minnie's triumph in the vulgar antics of George. He does, however, when Minnie is talking enthusiastically about her discovery, say to the others: "We've had a moment of exaltation—we've felt the touch of strange wings . . . we're still children playing with a great fire." But the others, of course, do not take him seriously, and he does not care.

There follows the scene in Willie's room in which Frances, Minnie, and Willie grow suspicious and confused, and Willie begins to see the light. Next morning Taliaferro appears with the Cadwaladers during a dramatic scene between Minnie and

Frances. Now again he is smart and heartless. He must know that Minnie is suffering, but he urges her on to more suffering. We may believe that he does have some faith in this theory which Minnie is putting into practice and in which the rest are shamming; but he is brutal in his experimentation with her; and he still plays his double rôle, never giving his friends much of a chance to believe him serious.

As the act progresses, we may be certain that he has a suspicion of how things are going to turn out. The others laugh at Minnie as she tells of the night before. He joins in the laughter. But he continues to help Minnie; he brings a sincere note into the conversation now and then.

Two questions may puzzle us in the last act. The first is, what is his real attitude towards Willie's mother who, coming into the room, dominates the scene with her comic anger and her common sense? Does he understand her and appreciate her? From what we know of Taliaferro we may believe that he talks with his tongue in his cheek; he understands her, he urges her on, he likes her. He tells her later: "I think I recognize in you an individuality almost as natural and untrammelled as my own. We ought to appreciate . . . each other."

The second question is sure to arise and tangle up the last scene if it is not solved beforehand.

What is Taliaferro's attitude towards Willie and Minnie in the last scene? He is brutally frank and slanderous towards Willie, criticizing his appearance and his prospective portrait. He disregards Willie's presence and feelings while he talks confidentially to Minnie about her future, and what he can do for her that Willie cannot do. Why does he do these things? Undoubtedly he understands the situation he has brought about. He appreciates Minnie. He sees that Willie likes her. He drives Minnie's ambition higher and higher and Willie's anger higher and higher. Then he leaves. But his talk and behavior bear fruit. He has fired Willie with the resolve to express *himself*, and this he does, with freedom and gusto, by proposing to Minnie. One can imagine Taliaferro, outside the door, lighting a cigaret and exulting in his half-serious, egotistical fashion: "There you are. I was right. I am always right."

Now the actor who comprehends the character, and has motivated his speech and behavior throughout the play, has solved the biggest problems in his task of interpretation. He has now to make himself the character.

He takes the usual steps. He sees him as an actual person and not a stage figure. He visualizes several scenes in Taliaferro's past life, for he wants to know how this man came to turn his fine ability to think and to create into sham and in-

sincerity. Possibly the answer will be found in his lack of will: he followed the path of least resistance and easy money.

The inner characterization is clear. Attention must be given to outer appearance, to movement, gesture, and voice. His voice is consciously smart or consciously wise; his movements are consciously timed, consciously used for effect. Not only must the actor's mind always be alert to the behavior of his character, but the character's mind, as he consciously and continually *acts*, must be apparent to the audience. The character is moved by mental ideas and is given a mental interpretation.

Taliaferro is not highly complex, his characteristics are few in number; but these are elusive. They must be clear and must be revealed through both the outer and inner character. The outer is important in this case. The actor will have to live with the character for many days, for his interpretation must be a finished piece of work. His walk, his gesture, his physical pose must be sure. He must have grace and carry himself with an air. Body and voice must tell us nearly all.

The actor must make us believe in Taliaferro and must hold our belief throughout. The temptation may come time and again to let his character play farce. He says to Minnie upon his first meeting with her: "I keep thinking you're beau-

tiful and then I see you aren't. That's a pity. You should have been." (He stares at her). "Oh, I'm not talking about your nose. What have you done or not done that has kept you from being beautiful?" The actor must find honest motivation for such a speech in his understanding and belief in Taliaferro's character. Again, during the farce situation in which George and Taliaferro talk over Minnie's head, the actor must make his character hold him from playing farce.

Taliaferro is a mental character. He is motivated by mental ideas and is unemotional in his expression, but he brings about a great deal of the emotional display in the play. He is a delightful challenge to the actor who is physically fitted for the part and who is intelligent and sensitive enough to grasp the character and its possibilities.

(C) CATHERINE IN *GREAT CATHERINE*

As we begin work on Catherine in *Great Catherine* by Shaw, it would be well to read the author's preface to the play; in fact, an actor will always profit by reading Shaw's prefaces.

The dramatist himself refers to the play as "a bravura piece" and a "seeming tomfoolery." He says further: "Catherine as a woman of plenty of character, and (as we should say) no morals, still fascinates and amuses us. . . . They were great

sentimental comedians who played their tsarships as eccentric character parts and produced scene after scene of furious harlequinade with monarch as clown and of tragic relief in the torture chamber . . . not forgetting the indispensable love interest on an enormous and utterly indecorous scale. . . . Historical portraiture is not the motive of the play nor is the sketch of Catherine complete idiosyncratically.”³

Whether we are director or actor Shaw is helpful to us here. He warns us that this is an amusing play; he hints strongly that we should have a good time with these people. Both the mood of the play and the approach to Catherine’s character are given in the preface.

Once more we begin with the stage directions and once more we find them highly characterizing. We see Catherine first in bed—she yawns, turns over on her back and stretches, yawns again—throws herself into a chair—paces the chamber with a deep sense of the importance of her museum—runs to a chair and sits down, thrusting out her bare feet—plunges into bed again and covers herself up; Patiomkin dumps Edstaston, the English captain, on the foot of the bed; Catherine, blazing with wrath, pushes Edstaston out of bed on the floor. Later in the scene she tries hard not

³ This and other quotations from Shaw’s *Great Catherine* are used by permission of Brentano’s, the publishers.

to laugh, but the courtiers know by experience that she will not succeed—she kicks the drunken Patiomkin as hard as she can and hurts her toe—she puts a pillow under Patiomkin's head, then turns to Edstaston and speaks in her queenliest manner—she speaks like a fish hag, then resumes her impressive regal manner—she smiles at Edstaston, extends her hand to be kissed, and slaps Edstaston's cheek coquettishly. In the last scene she sits on the throne in full court regalia and tickles Edstaston who lies tied up on the floor beneath her; she tickles him in the ribs with her toe!—she reads Voltaire and soliloquizes rapturously on him—she sticks out her foot and examines it critically—tickles Edstaston again—rises in wrath—conquers herself with a mighty effort—laughs good-humoredly—calls imperiously—has quite inexpressible feelings—and says her curtain speech with an ineffable smile.

This amusing, vulgar, amorously ambitious, tolerant and imperious domesticated German woman who has been made Empress, is becoming clear already. If there is still doubt about her, we have only to listen to some of her speeches, beginning with the first: "Heigho—ah—yah—ah—ow. What o'clock is it? . . . Get up, get up. Your etiquette bores me. . . . Have them flogged? I, a liberal Empress! A philosopher!" (We get the true significance of these lines!) "I am the only

person in Russia who gets no fun out of my being Empress. . . . I wear a crown until my neck aches: I stand looking majestic until I'm ready to drop. . . . When I was only an Archduchess, the English ambassador used to give me money whenever I wanted it. . . . What a liar you are. . . . An enlightened capital must have a museum. . . ." (As she kicks Patiomkin:) "Hog! Oh! you have broken my toe. . . . Let him lie. Let him sleep it off." (Later to Edstaston:) "Courtier! . . . Stupid? By no means. Courage, Captain: we are pleased. We are greatly pleased."

From the speeches and the reactions of the other characters we are able to add that her subordinates fear her yet take liberties behind her back; that her ideas of sanitation and the proprieties are hardly modern; that she is a great lover.

From our three-fold study the character stands out clearly. The actor sees her, not as a portrait, but as a caricature drawn by a master caricaturist. Catherine is intelligent, she has personality, she can wield power; yet her manners are middle class, her love-making amusing in its naïvete. She is an Empress and can assume the bearing and habits of an Empress, but she does not particularly like it because she gets so little fun out of it. She calls herself liberal-minded, enlightened, but she hardly qualifies for such titles. Her naïvete, her good-

humor, the general ridiculousness of the situations in which the playwright places her, keep her from becoming disgusting or vulgar.

At the time of the play she is about forty-five. We know from history and from the way Shaw has presented her that she is a big woman, portly, with a heavy walk, and a regal manner which she puts on and takes off; we learn from the play that her voice, which still retains its German accent, is now that of a fish hag and now that of a great queen.

The actress finds no great barriers to surmount in comprehending the character; but playing the character is quite another matter. The play is in reality a "play"; it is all exaggeration and fun; so she need not realize the character in life or construct Catherine's biography,—save that a re-reading of Catherine's career will give her background. The actress must grasp Shaw's spirit: she cannot play Shaw unless she understands and accepts his spirit. She must become the caricaturist. She must play farce.

Catherine lives in the mind as a real personality, a personality exaggerated from actuality, even if she does not become an actual woman in an actual world. For those who understand farce, the clownish attitude and the clownish touch are not so difficult; for them the inner character, and an expression of this character which is beyond the

bounds of reality, can be determined. Let us hope that our actress possesses the farce viewpoint.

Even if she understands farce, the outer character and its expression may not be altogether simple. The actress playing Catherine cannot be a wisp of a girl, weighing ninety-eight pounds. She should be large, or should have the ability to suggest bigness by thinking of herself as big and by behaving as though she were big. She should stand erect, with a conscious straightness. Her walk should be a little too heavy for either grace or dignity. Comfort, rather than grace, should govern the manner in which she sits. Her smile should be broad and contagious, her glances quick, for she sees more than her speeches tell us she sees. Yet, while emphasizing certain physical characteristics for comedy, the actress must remain sensitive for, if she goes beyond good taste, the charm of the character is lost; if she goes too far beyond reality, the spirit of the play is lost.

The character is not subtle and there is no character development. The actress absorbs the spirit of the play and identifies herself with the mental and emotional nature of Catherine and experiments with her own vocal and bodily mediums of expression. Now it is evident that she needs a voice capable of variety and power, capable of an occasional subtlety of speech; an expressive body which will respond to the mind and feelings of

Catherine. She should strive for a low, full voice; she should suggest the German dialect slightly by substituting a few sounds such as the "y" sound for that of the "j," the "ts" sound for that of "s" the "p" sound for that of "b"; her voice when she addresses Patiomkin should be harsh and unrefined, when she addresses Edstaston queenly and dripping with sweetness; when she is reflecting on her lot, it should have a touch of longing, of pathos, which is comic in its seriousness; and always her voice should have strength and be alive.

She should walk with head up and feet apart. Perhaps she will frequently clasp her hands across her stomach and gesticulate with a slight upward movement of the elbows.

As she puts the character into the specific action of the play, the actress should play her broadly and clearly but never too rapidly. In the first scene Catherine must really yawn, grunt, turn over heavily; for she must give full value to her contrast with the courtiers standing about in full court costume; she has to astonish and delight her audience.

As she rehearses the play, the actress may be troubled about the motivation; but if she accepts the premise that we are in farce and that the character and situations are exaggerated from reality, the question of motivation can be easily handled. *If* such a world did exist, the behavior of Cath-

erine would proceed along the lines described ; and the actress accepts such a world, she must create such a world. So, the character who would tolerate Patiomkin and his dirty, disorderly apartment, would not hesitate to kick him and call him a hog ; the character who would tolerate Patiomkin as a lover, and long for the days when she could make love as she pleased, would not hesitate to try her charms on the handsome but stupid Edstaston.

The actress, knowing these things and trying for Catherine's character, needs repeatedly the advice of the director, for she is in constant danger of over-playing or under-playing ; also, she needs a supporting cast which understands and feels the play as she does, for there should be no jarring note in the way the different characters are interpreted, in the degree of the farce. Edstaston and Patiomkin must be played with the same exaggeration and good taste as are demanded of her. And as she plays, she should be conscious of her audience and be ready to wait for laughs, to adjust her playing to this sense of the comic and of the proprieties.

Catherine is not a difficult character to comprehend. One of the chief problems in playing her is that she must be played as farce but not as broad farce ; and this is often difficult for an actress of limited experience.

(D) GIANNETTO IN *THE JEST*

For a last character we choose Giannetto in Sem Benelli's romantic tragedy, played in this country under the title of *The Jest*. For those unfamiliar with the play, enough of the story and dialogue for our study are to be found in Burns Mantle's *The Best Plays of 1919-1920*.

The Jest is a page from a vivid period in Florentine history, a period of cruelty and beauty, which together form the dominating mood of the play. The story, briefly, tells of the cruel treatment of Giannetto, a young artist, at the hands of Neri, a captain of mercenaries, and his brother Gabriello; of the helplessness of Giannetto; of his growing cowardice and fear; of his scheme to defeat his enemy, giving cruelty for cruelty; of his putting this scheme into operation in a very hysteria of fear; of the consequences of his bold scheme: Neri's escape from his captors, his recapture, his torture in the dungeon, his feigned madness; of Giannetto's oscillating feelings, his passion for revenge, his weakening, his moments of resolution, his pitiful pleading for release from this mad joke; of his unnatural calm as he prepares the way for Neri to kill his own brother; of his moment of terror and exaltation after the murder and his final peace because at last he is able to pray.

Here is a drama full of action, emotion, sensations. Here is a character ruled completely by one emotion, possessing none but emotional ideas, and rushing from one emotional scene to another. The character, then, contrasts at every point with Taliaferro. He is a representative (overdrawn, perhaps) of his own exciting times, and of Italian fire, passion, absence of repression. This we learn as we make our usual study of the character.

Let us look at a few of the stage directions in the first act. We learn that Giannetto is frail, small, wistful; he interrupts other speakers; he kisses his hand; he sings a little tune and pirouettes a few steps; he changes his tone, pauses, is swept on by his narration; he speaks sadly, fearfully, suddenly, fiercely; he clings to his dwarf in terror; he speaks rapidly, he pretends to be terrified; he throws on his mantle, opens the doors, cries with savage exaltation, and goes blindly into the night.

In Act II, after he has spent the night in Neri's bed, and as he is talking with Ginevra, who is now Neri's lover but was formerly his own, he is polite, humble, speaks lightly, then breaks into a sob of passion, is in a transport; suddenly turns fearful at the approach of Neri. After Neri is bound, he speaks with a gentle, pitying irony, though still fearful; and his voice rises in triumph as Neri is led away.

In Act III, when Neri is chained to the torture post, Giannetto's eyes gleam, he utters a terrible cry of joy, he leans against Neri and whispers; then with the face of a demon he picks up the scourge and approaches Neri. Later, sickened by his plan of revenge, he relents. His gesture is broken, he turns wildly to Lisabetta, he fiercely clasps his hands, he is at the height of his despair. He crosses himself, calls to the executioner, and when Neri is led away to be set free, bursts into sobs.

So we pass on to the last act in which, after Giannetto has succeeded in driving Neri to the murder of his brother, the little artist clings to the tapestry, thrusts his head forward like a poisonous snake, looks at his victim with glittering eyes, and at last turns to the shrine, kneels, crosses himself, and prays.

From a reading of the stage directions the actor is aware that here is a character moved by emotion, a character largely expressed through bodily action, a character which must be approached and handled in a manner vastly different from the others we have considered.

The vocal demands, and also a verification of the variety of emotions, swift changes, and dominating fear, are clear in a study of the lines: "I should have been a peaceful, happy painter of Madonnas. Like young del Sarto, sir, and Ra-

phael, too. But now that dream has faded. . . . But oh, sir, I have one thing left—my wits! turned by my suffering into gleaming steel! . . . It was not agony that made me shriek, but laughter! I laughed! And I laugh still! Laugh! . . .” Clinging to the misshapen dwarf, he explains: “We are two weak creatures, so we help each other.” When Neri is gone, he cries to Tornaquinci, his host: “You, sir, to the Magnificent. Tell him my vengeance has begun,—atrocious, horrible, as he commands! Tell him that there are banners floating in my heart,—and that tomorrow—tomorrow—I can pray.”⁴

In his scene with Ginevra, in Act II, these moods are found: “What have I dared permit myself? Of what can you reproach me . . . I love the fruit so much I could not tear it like a robber from the bough. . . . To glide down black walls of velvet to a sacred orchard, whose guardian giant was bound with chains of steel. . . . My hate hungers for a ten times richer feast. . . . You are my saint, my church, my altar candle—my ruin, my hell, my black damnation— Revenge! My beautiful revenge!” To Neri, bound to the pillar, he gloats: “God cannot help you, Neri. You must call on me! On me—for years the butt of your bestial jokes.” But later: “Oh, Neri! Neri! Will you not

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cry quits? . . . This joke of ours is like a whirlpool. To what vile depths have we already sunk! . . . Peace! Peace! Upon my knees I beg for it!" And when Neri refuses his request: "God's will be done." He lays his plans, Neri is led forth, and he cries: "No, no, you fiend from hell! You belong to me. . . . Fazio, tonight—tonight I must damn my own soul to hell! Oh, Lucifer, stretch out your blazing arms and catch me as I plunge into the abyss!"

We have not shown every mood and change, but we have shown enough for our purpose. Here is a study of a pitiful coward who repels even as he attracts; of a poetic boy who once found joy in love and beauty and starlight, but who has been turned by suffering, by repeated physical torture, into a cringing, fearful creature. Here is a weak boy whose wits are sharpened by fear, whose sporadic moments of bravery are actuated by fear, whose periods of depression are dominated by fear. Here is a character requiring for his portrayal splendid bodily control, and demanding grace and beauty of movement; requiring a fine voice and the ability to read rhythmic lines which are occasionally full of poetry.

The conception of the character is readily grasped. But let us remember that we see our character at the very climax of his suffering, and that the long years of torture preceding the play

must be felt, must be presented to the audience.

The motivation is clear: it is fear; and seldom is Giannetto in aught but a state of terror. Fear drives him to his cruel jokes, but the actor must be certain as to the sort of cruelty the boy is capable of. Neri has inflicted upon Giannetto a physical cruelty; but Giannetto cringes from inflicting a like cruelty. He is in terror of physical suffering, and in Act III, when he picks up the scourge to lash Neri, he cannot bring himself to do it. No. His torture must be mental, it is an inner thing; and it condemns, torments, terrifies him as he sets it in motion; it is destructive of himself. The audience should be clear on this when the actor plays the part.

Now, we repeat, the actor undertaking the part needs both a well trained body and voice; he needs also an emotional equipment; more than this, he needs a thoroughly dramatic bodily and emotional expression. The task before him is expression. The great danger is in overplaying the part. The temptation is to yield wholly to feeling and to play without restraint. Certainly the actor has to feel his character, he has to feel this dominating fear which must be presented emotionally; but as he begins to play the part, he has once more to set his mind as guard over his emotions.

In an emotional part we do well, as we have suggested, to create the emotional situations first

within ourselves. For example, we may say: "What would *I do* if Butch Maginnis inflicted such cruelty on me? How would I feel? How would I react?" Thus we learn something about emotions and about our reactions to them. Then we say: "Here is a boy who is different from us in these ways, and whose background is the Florence of Lorenzo the Magnificent. What changes would these emotions undergo if transplanted in him? What would be his reactions?" We translate the feelings from our own nature to the nature of our character.

We must know what emotions he would express and why and how he would express them; then we should identify ourselves with him, and try to express them. We do not follow any one method in this. We may try to live the character and express the emotion, keeping our minds ever on the bounds we have prescribed for the emotion; again, in our private rehearsing we may forget these bounds and seek only for a convincing expression of the emotion, allowing our feelings complete domination. But before we are ready to put the character into the play, we must subject our expression to a mental examination. Our emotion must not be meaningless, must not be unrestrained. The character is emotionalized so much of the time, that we must take care we do not spoil our climaxes, and we must not overlook any oppor-

tunity to relax, to quiet down. The emotion must be reasonable and must be motivated.

More than in most characters, we have to have a body which speaks an emotional language. We have to train and use our body so that the audience feels in it this fear and terror. To do this again requires a conscious guardianship over gesture and movement. We can help in our creation and expression of this character by engaging in much pantomime. In working for bodily expression, we strive for two things: first, for a grace and beauty in movement which are in keeping with the character and the mood of the play; then we take this body which moves gracefully and beautifully and strive for its reaction to the emotion of fear in its several manifestations.

Vocally our task is likewise difficult. We must bring to the part a voice capable of beautiful speech and possessing power and variety. We must be able, as we have said, to read lines. We consider the emotions under which Giannetto speaks: terror, pity, irony, gentleness, hate, despair. We express these emotions through our own voice without reference to Giannetto, determining how these emotions affect and change the voice. Then we think of Giannetto's voice: a soft, beautiful, singing voice. Knowing already what to do with our own voice in order to express the emotions, we now use our character's voice for their expression.

We know and feel our character; we try for adequate bodily and vocal expression; we learn our lines; then we put our character into the specific action of the play. As we rehearse we should live in the character as long as possible without break; we should sustain the mood and the drama without interruption. As the time of the performance draws near, we should not think consciously of our audience; and we should approach the night of the performance after a period of rest, for the creation of Giannetto is very exhausting.

Giannetto is an outstanding example of a highly emotionalized character—moved chiefly by emotion. He may be a discouraging character to work on, but he is able to teach the actor a great deal about one kind of acting.

(E) OTHER CHARACTERS FOR STUDY

In the preceding sections we have taken only four characters from modern drama. In discussing them we have not found it practical to mention many combinations of mental and emotional traits, many specific problems of motivation, many of the mediums of expression employed in combination, or many of the minor problems which may become important and demand attention; but

by going back to his knowledge of the general process and applying this knowledge as we have to these four characters, the actor should be able to find his way through most of his creation and interpretation problems.

If the actor wishes to continue his study of character for interpretation, we would direct him to Patiomkin, a character in *Great Catherine*, as one in which body and voice play a dominant part in the interpretation; or Ferrand in *The Pigeon*, who requires a keen understanding of life, who displays a nice balance of the emotional and mental in his motivation and expression, who calls for the interpretation of the inner self as well as significant vocal and bodily expression.

If the actor is still ambitious, he may try his abilities on John Beal in Dunsany's fantastic comedy *If*. This character becomes puzzling because of the changes in the kinds of drama to be found in the play. The character as he first appears is easy to understand and promises no difficulties; but Beal starts as a low comedy character, has to play high comedy in the railway carriage scene, farce in Act II, in Act III, romantic melodrama which grows more and more fantastic, and in Act IV plays sentimental comedy, changing back, at the end of the play, to the mood in which the play started. In this same play the actor finds Daoud, a character who, with a minimum of bodily

and a maximum of vocal acting, projects a fine, poetic, atmospheric figure.

The less ambitious actor will find the many volumes of one-act plays filled with characters which offer any kind of problem he wants to attempt to solve.

Modern drama also provides many combinations of problems for the actress. Paula Tanqueray in Pinero's *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*, is an emotional character, governed by emotion; a serious study of a woman who makes objective a moral idea; a character that is portrayed largely through movement, action, facial expression, and the projection of varying moods; a mature, impressive character who undergoes a development through a series of tragic, dramatic events. In the same play is the younger character, Ellean, a girl whose nature undergoes a radical change during the course of the action.

In *Expressing Willie* the actress finds an interesting study in Mrs. Smith, who dominates her scenes through the personality of her character and the comic lines she speaks. There are three more good character studies in this play in Frances Sylvester, Dolly Cadwalader, and Minnie Whitcomb. Frances and Minnie contrast at many points. Dolly approaches what we once called a straight part, in that her personality and reactions are normal.

For the interpretation of Mrs. Megan in *The Pigeon*, the actress must understand a great deal about life and must know the background and biography of her character. The interpretation of Ann in the same play makes none of the same demands. Ann's reactions are normal. Her life has been normal. She is a simple, almost a "type" character, and is easy to play. The actress will find her greatest problem in the temptation to over-act Ann; over-acting would be disastrous to her. Mary Beal in *If* is a comedy character. She is a very conventional person of very limited mentality. In playing her, the actress sees Mary's small mind, and endeavors to think with only a small spot in her own mind! Mary is honest, sincere, lacking in humor, and very good; her dumb devotion to the principles which these things represent, makes her a delightful comic figure.

Throughout this work of creating character and identifying oneself with character, we always pass through much the same process. The process varies as the characters vary, demanding emphasis on the emotional or mental, on projection through the mind and personality or through body and voice, as one character differs from another. In our task of identification we generally start with conscious, and perhaps unsuccessful, experimentation on whatever our outstanding prob-

lems are; we progress to conscious accomplishment; and then, through intelligent repetition, we may reach a state of unconscious accomplishment. This is our goal.

CHAPTER VIII

MAKING-UP

(A) FACTORS INVOLVED IN THE PROBLEM OF MAKING-UP

MAKING-UP is an essential part of the actor's labors. Since modern drama contains characters which are highly individualized, the individuality should extend to externals, to the cut and condition of clothes and the appearance of face, hair, and hands. The clothes are generally taken care of by someone whose business it is to costume the cast; make-up is occasionally given over to a professional or to someone who makes up all the performers.

Although this division of labor is *frequently* satisfactory, the actor should learn to make himself up. If he has studied his character in somewhat the manner we have outlined, he should know the face he wishes to reproduce better than some person who, perhaps knows only a little about the play and scarcely nothing about the character; and if he has learned the fundamentals of make-up and has spent some time in practice, the actor

should be able to make himself up better than any outsider. Make-up should be a part of the actor's business and we shall consider it as such. Although no book can teach him how to make up, yet experimentation, guided by the suggestions which a book may offer, should give him the ability and confidence he needs.

Before we discuss some of the fundamentals and offer suggestions for his experimentation, we would call the actor's attention to three factors which prevent any general rules for make-up from applying to many individual cases.

First, each individual cast of features prescribes individual treatment. Some features are large and some are small, some sharp and some round, some regular and others irregular. No two faces are alike. Therefore, no make-up can be applied to two faces with exactly the same result. The same line under one eye may produce a natural effect and under another an unnatural effect. One mouth may need much rouge and another little or none.

Second, the visibility of the actor on the stage determines the amount of make-up and even its method of application. Two conditions determine visibility: the size of the theatre and the intensity of the light. If the theatre is large, then it is obvious that a soft, light, carefully blended make-up will be lost on the majority of the audience; a heavy, less carefully blended make-up will carry

better. As the light increases in intensity, more care is required in blending, shading, and lining. In other words, the better the visibility, either because of intensity of lights or nearness of actors to audience, the less crude and heavy must be the make-up; the poorer the visibility, the heavier and cruder it may be.

Third, the source and color of the lights determine the placing of high-lights and shadows and, occasionally, the color of the make-up. If an actor is playing in strong footlights and dim top lights, certain portions of the face are given unnatural high-lights, certain other portions unnatural shadows; if he is playing in strong top lights and dim foots, other portions of his face are high-lighted and shadowed; if he is playing with both foots and borders on, high-lights and shadows become more natural. In respect to the color of the lights, we know that some colors bring out each other, others kill each other. The question of the properties and qualities of color becomes important when colored light is used. For instance, red lips and rouged cheeks under a blue light appear grayish-black; bluish-gray shadows will be changed to a deep slate under a strong amber.

These factors, then, stand in the way of any infallible rules for make-up. Before the actor can know just what to do, he has to study his face. He

has to experiment in order to see what his face needs for certain effects. Before he is ready to apply a particular make-up, he ought to know the size of the auditorium and the intensity of the light. It is apparent that a make-up rehearsal is desirable in the theatre and under the light conditions of the actual performance. Before he is ready to put on his make-up, he should take into account the source of light and its color, and he should make up under source and color conditions approximating those which will be used on the stage.

These conditions may be easily approximated. Near the make-up table there should be two lights, —one above the mirror and one, on a movable cord, below the mirror on the table. With these two lights the source of light can be duplicated. When borders are to be used, the light on the table can be turned out; when the foots are to be strong, the light above can be turned off. Likewise, the sockets can be fitted with bulbs of the same color as those which are to be used in the play.

Several factors, therefore, enter into the question of make-up and make it a matter of individual experimentation and of adjustment to a combination of conditions. These factors cannot be taken into account in a brief discussion of our subject. We shall mention only certain fundamentals which

the actor will modify to meet his individual case, and offer some suggestions for his experimentation.

(B) THE MAKE-UP BOX

Before he begins his experimentation, the actor must supply himself with certain materials. We shall prepare for our work by filling our make-up box, putting in everything necessary for almost any occasion, even though we recognize that a less complete equipment is sufficient for ordinary use; indeed, half a dozen ground colors, some rouge, one or two powders and a can of cold cream are adequate for many plays.

We go to the drug store, costume, or make-up house for our material. We should not be willing to accept the materials offered by every manufacturer, for some are reliable and some are not, and occasionally a manufacturer puts out a product which, because of its ingredients, is harmful to the skin. We should know something about the name of the brand we are buying.

Having satisfied ourselves on this point, we purchase the following:

1. A number of ground or flesh colors which come in large round sticks and in all shades ranging from "clown white" through "natural flesh" and "deeper shade" to

"healthy sunburn." The ground colors also include sallow and ruddy old age, Othello, Chinese, Indian, East Indian, etc. We put in an assortment of ten sticks.

2. A half-dozen liners which come in sticks like the ground tones, but are not so thick. We choose black, dark gray, light gray, light brown, blue, white, and carmine. We may add crimson, ultra-marine, yellow, etc., but since these are rarely used, we decide we can do without them.
3. Several boxes of powder to match the more commonly used ground tones. We decide that we can use white, pink flesh tint, brunette flesh tint, sunburn, and gray. The white is applied to Pierrot and clown make-ups; pink flesh and brunette to straight make-ups; sunburn darkens the complexion and can be used for making hollow cheeks and eyes; while the gray gives the appearance of unshaven faces and can be used for hollows in the cheeks and neck. There are other powders such as Ruddy Rouge, Chinese, and Indian, but it is not necessary to include them in our box.
4. We had better put in one or more Liquid Colors which are applied to the neck, arms, and hands where grease paint would soil in coming in contact with the clothes.

Several shades may be purchased, but ordinary flesh is perhaps all we shall have need for.

5. A small jar or stick of lip rouge to give color and expression to the lips and mouth.
6. Blond and brunet powder rouge for the cheeks.
7. A few cakes of Water Cosmetique (white, black, brown, and auburn) or Mascaro (white and black) for changing the color of the hair, eyebrows, and beard.

This may complete our list of actual make-up material, but we shall need several other items before our box is ready for the theatre.

8. We need a can of theatrical cold cream. Cold cream is applied to the face before making up and is also used in removing the grease paint. A bar of cocoa butter, if we prefer it, can be used for the removal of the paint.
9. We shall also need lining sticks and powder puffs. For lining we can use orange sticks or artists' stumps, or, if we prefer them, toothpicks or sharpened match sticks. Since we are assembling a complete equipment, we put in several orange sticks and several stumps. We should have a medium sized, wool powder puff, and one or more large

puffs. Hare's feet are serviceable in applying powder for hollows, for rouging the cheeks, and also in removing powder which is too heavy. We add two hare's feet.

A make-up box containing the above named materials will be found sufficient for almost any type of character. We have not, however, taken care of the question of beards.

10. Beards on wire are unsatisfactory; they generally look like nothing but false whiskers, so we shall have none of them; but if our pocketbook will still permit of it, we put in two or three beards and a half dozen moustaches on gauze. These are easily put on, easily trimmed, can be used over and over, and give a very natural appearance. Crêpe or crimped hair is also serviceable for making beards and moustaches. We take half a yard each of black, dark brown, iron gray, and white. (Crêpe hair comes in tight strands.) For sticking on either the hair or the gauze we need a bottle of spirit gum, and for its removal a bottle of alcohol.
11. Still one more article should be put in: a can of nose putty which is used to build the nose and chin into any desired shape.
12. We have now finished our purchasing; but on our way to the theatre or make-up room

we stop at our homes and get a comb, scissors, some cheese cloth or old towels, a candle, and some matches. With these we complete our equipment.

As we look over our materials, we see that our box is full and more than adequate for most of our demands. We could have done with one-half, even one-third of these materials, blending and combining our colors as a painter mixes his paints. Or, we could have gone on purchasing, adding wax for blocking out the teeth, Fuller's Earth for sal-low complexions, and many other items.

(C) STRAIGHT MAKE-UP

The actor would do well to begin his experimentation with a simple make-up. Although we may question the existence of "straight" characters in most modern drama, we can refer to a "straight" make-up as one which does not attempt to change the natural appearance of the face, but which brings out the natural features so that they will carry across the footlights. Such a make-up will serve for a demonstration of the use of our materials.

As a preparation, the male actor should shave several hours, but not immediately, before making

up; and the girl should see that her face is clear of rouge and powder.

As we proceed, we shall consider the stage and auditorium to be of average size, and the lighting to be from both foots and borders and of moderate intensity.

The actor, sitting at the make-up table with a good light and a good mirror before him, begins by applying a thin coating of cold cream to his face and neck. This is worked in well, then rubbed off so that the face does not appear greasy. This application will protect the skin and aid in the removal of the paint. The ground color is then selected. The tint of the ground color depends upon the age and type of character to be portrayed, and upon the light and theatre conditions before mentioned. We shall choose Deeper Shade (commonly called Number 5) ground color. The stick is rubbed lightly over the face and neck. We must be careful not to put it on too thick, otherwise we shall take away the expression from the face; and we must blend it in, being sure that the paint covers the neck and ears. If the paint stops at the jaw line, our make-up will have the appearance of a mask. The paint is rubbed in with the tips of the fingers.

When the ground color has been smoothed down, we take either a stick of carmine or maroon (ground or lining color) or a powder rouge and

apply the red to the cheeks. If we use grease paint, we make a small patch on each cheek, and then with the fingers spread it and blend it in, carrying it towards the nose rather than down the sides of the face; if we use the powder, it can be applied with the hare's foot. We observe from a study of faces that the color on a man's cheek is usually higher than that on a woman's.

Lining the eyes is more of an individual problem. If the lashes are full and dark, it is unnecessary to draw a line beneath them, but it is advisable to extend the eyes outward by drawing a line from the outside corner about a half inch in length. If the lashes are thin and light, the eyes may be lined both above and below, joining the lines and extending them a short distance beyond the outside corners of the eyes. The color of the lines will depend upon the color of the hair and the complexion of the character. Black is rarely used. Dark brown and light brown are common. The lines should not extend to the inner corners of the eyes, but should begin nearer the middle of the eyes. A line completely encircling the eye will give it a round appearance which is unnatural. The eye lines should be thin and should be drawn close to the eye. For lining, the orange stick, stump, or a toothpick is used.

To add to the brilliancy of the eye, a touch of

carmine is placed an eighth of an inch from the inside corner.

If the eyebrows are too heavy, it may be advisable to diminish their thickness with ground color. If they are not too heavy and are dark, lining may be unnecessary, but they should be extended downward and outward, not too far, however, towards the temples. If they are light and thin, they should be lined and extended, the line following the natural arch of the eyebrow. The color, as suggested, depends upon the color of the hair and the complexion.

Next, we make up the lips. If the lips have color and are full, they need little or no make-up. In case they are not, the line of the lips is defined lightly with lip rouge which is applied with the tip of the finger. The lips should not be made too prominent by a heavy coat of rouge; neither should the "cupid's bow" be too large or too small. Small painted lips give a doll-like, or puckered effect. If the actor's lips are large and thick, he may paint his lips the desired size, and cover the remainder of the natural lips with ground tone.

One or more minor touches may be necessary before we are ready for the powder. Cheek hollows or small eye circles may be covered with a light shade of ground color. A weak chin may be improved by high-lighting the lower portion. (By

high-light we mean the use of a light color which gives the spot prominence; it represents a spot upon which the light is supposed to fall. It is the opposite of shadow. In make-up, a high-light is obtained by using a flesh or lining color of a shade lighter than the surrounding color,—a shade so light that it does not blend but contrasts with the color around it.) The ears may be tinted, and a pink tint may be blended in just under the eyebrows to do away with an unnatural high-light caused by the footlights. In straight make-up the male actor should beware of colors which give him a pink and white appearance.

The powder is now applied to blend and soften the grease paint. We shall use a shade of powder lighter than our ground color. We must be careful not to fill our puff too full, and we should powder our make-up evenly, being careful not to neglect the throat and neck. If the powder is too heavy, we remove it with the hare's foot. Our make-up is now complete.

In order to remove the make-up, a thin coating of cold cream or cocoa butter is applied and rubbed in wherever there is grease paint. The paint may then be removed with a towel or cloth. It is well to have a supply of cheese cloth on hand, both for protecting the clothes when making up, and for use in removing make-up.

(D) CHARACTER MAKE-UP

The actor is aware that we cannot say: "you put on a character make-up this way." A character is an individual and has specific facial characteristics; the actor is likewise an individual with specific facial characteristics; and our problem is that of taking one combination of specific characteristics and changing them to a combination of different specific characteristics. We cannot tell an actor how to make up for his character; we can only point out ways in which he can change his own facial characteristics.

There are two bases for a make-up which does not emphasize the natural features of the actor. The first is found in the racial features which the character has inherited. We hardly need to call attention to the fact that we can, by looking at his face, distinguish a Scandinavian from an Italian, or a Chinaman from an Irishman. The Scandinavian has a broad face, healthy complexion, color in his cheeks, straight blond hair, blue eyes; the Chinaman has eyebrows and eyelids which slant upward and outward, high cheek bones, a flat nose, a sallow complexion, while the complexion of the Japanese is healthier and cleaner and his eyes do not have such a pronounced slant; the American Indian has small



CHARACTER MAKE-UP: DIAGRAM SHOW-
ING PLACING OF LINES, SHADOWS AND HIGH LIGHTS.

LINES: \ SHADOWS ■ HIGH LIGHTS //

eyes, aquiline nose, thin compressed lips, high cheek bones; the Irishman's nose tends towards a "pug" and the distance from his nose to his thin upper lip is longer than in most races; characteristics of the Hebrew are his prominent curving nose with its peculiar nostril and his thick lips; the Frenchman's features are fine, his complexion medium; the Italian's features are full, his complexion dark. So we might continue.

The second basis for make-up is found in the inner passion, in the spiritual, mental, and physical life of the character, in the whole of environment which has stamped its mark upon his features. A woman who has lived a lonely, repressed life has that life written on her face. So has the man hardened in crime, the narcotic or alcoholic addict, the woman whose spirit is nourished by an abiding religious faith, the fat, carefree optimist, the hard-headed, hard-hearted factory owner.

We have, then, both racial and individual characteristics; features which are inherited and features which have been moulded by living conditions. The actor, as he creates his character, recognizes these characteristics; as he visualizes his character, they become clear and definite; and he makes up with these characteristics in mind.

Setting aside consideration of definite char-

acters, let us examine the face during youth and old age, and under different living conditions.

The Forehead—Beginning with the forehead, we find age, worry, or dissipation making lines above the eyebrows, and one or several small deep furrows between them. If we wrinkle our forehead, we see that the hollows of the wrinkles are dark and that the flesh between the wrinkles is noticeably light. Therefore, when drawing wrinkles, we should line our foreheads with gray or brown, using an orange stick or a toothpick. Black is too heavy. Thick lines and straight lines give an unnatural appearance.

The flesh between the hollows should be lined with a ground color or liner lighter in tone than the ground color of the face.

The furrows between the eyebrows usually extend diagonally upward from the end of each eyebrow. Two furrows of the same length or two furrows extending straight upwards tend to produce a comic rather than a realistic effect. The flesh between the furrows may be high-lighted.

With approaching age, hollows begin to appear at the temples. These can be reproduced by gray powder applied with a hare's foot or by a touch of gray paint, blended slightly into the ground color.

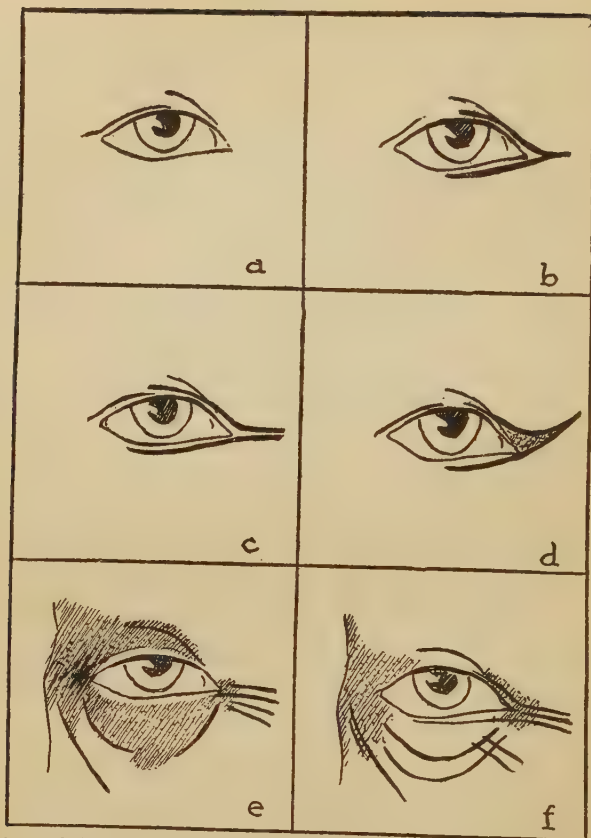
Another point in the make-up of the forehead is that the flesh sometimes becomes lighter near

the hair line. This effect can be produced by using a lighter ground tone near the hair line, blending it into the heavier ground near the eyebrows. This also tends to heighten the forehead.

Let the actor remember that the forehead may be lowered or raised, widened or narrowed, by the use of paints and wigs, or even by dressing the natural hair.

Eyebrows—The make-up of the eyebrows depends upon the character. Much can be done with the eyebrows. The natural eyebrow may be painted out and a new one painted on. To get rid of the eyebrows, they should be coated with soap. When the soap dries, it makes the hair adhere to the face and the ground color may be applied more easily. A new eyebrow can be painted on, either above or below the natural one, or the direction may be changed either upward or downward. Likewise, only a portion of the eyebrow may be painted out and a new portion added.

The eyebrow can be thinned by painting out part of it. It can be thickened either by grease paint or by sticking on crêpe hair. It can be made bushy and overhanging by daubing it with the liner and pushing the hairs outward and downward. It can be grayed for age, or an effect of age can be obtained by a spot of white in the center of the natural eyebrow. A sinister expres-



LINING THE EYES: a-WITHOUT
MAKE-UP b-STRAIGHT c-EGYPTIAN
d-ORIENTAL e-DISSIPATION f-OLD AGE

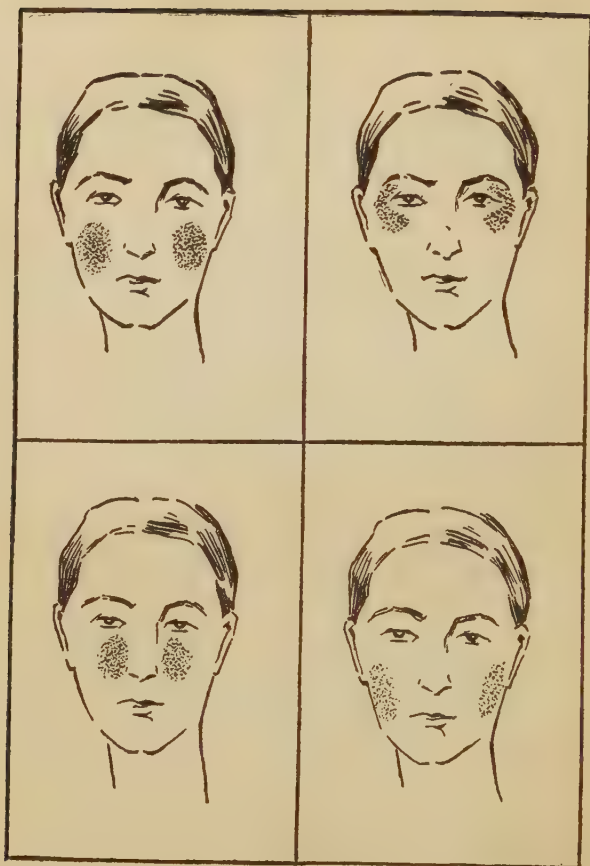
sion can be secured by painting out most of the eyebrow and sticking a bit of crêpe hair over the eyebrow above the inner corner of the eye.

The actor should beware of the black lining stick and should be moderate in the use of any lining color.

The Eyes—A chapter could be devoted to the eyes. As a preface to the suggestions we may offer, let us advise the actor that much more can be done through facial expression and through the feelings which animate his acting, than through the application of paint and powder. The staring eye, the narrowed eye, the eye that has lost its power of sight, even the tearful and the evil eye are the result of facial expression and feeling.

Make-up, however, can aid the eye in its expression. The eye can be sunk into the skull by shading around the eye. Gray or brown paint is used. The shading is darkest at the inside corners, is carried across the eyelids, and becomes lighter near the outside corners. The shading follows the line of the eye socket in the skull. As age approaches, "crow's feet" begin to spread in a fan-like shape over the temples. These are generally three or five in number in make-up, and are made with a fine lining stick. They may be high-lighted if desired.

Bags sometimes appear under the eyes. These



ROUGING THE CHEEKS : EFFECT OF
ROUGE IN DIFFERENT POSITIONS ON THE FACE-

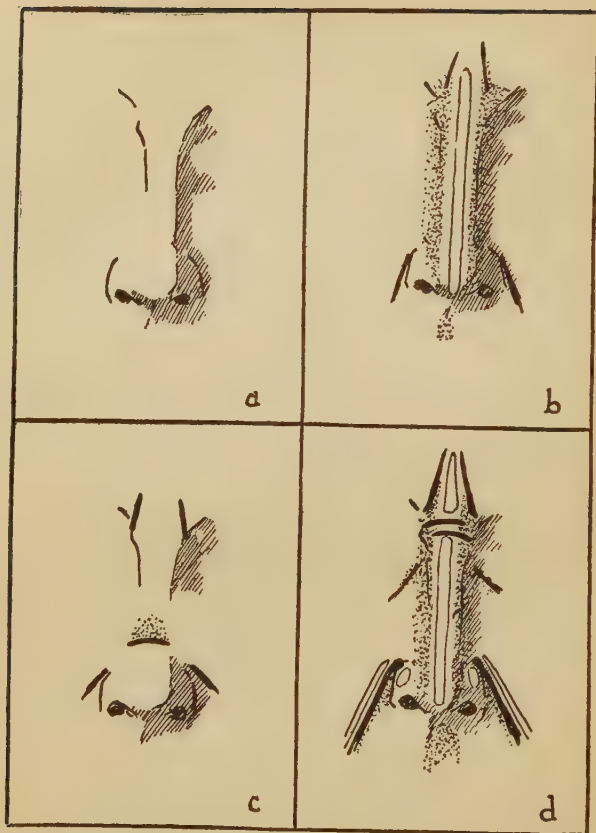
are made with the lining stick. They may be accentuated by a high-light above the dark line. A dissipated look can be given the eye by smudging the bag lines in the middle of the bag.

The eyes can be drawn together by dark shading on either side of the nose close to the bridge. A line under and above the inner half of the eye will aid in this effect. The eyes can be made to appear farther apart by shading and lining around the outer half.

An effect of tearful eyes can be produced by a soft red line above and below the eyes; an effect of sadness by graying the eyelids and lining the eyes with gray; the illusion of age may be aided by a light gray line below the eye.

The eyelashes may be "beaded" either with cosmetics or grease paint. If the end of an artists' stump is covered with black grease paint and the paint melted in the flame of a candle, it then can be easily applied to the lashes. The actor should be careful that the paint is not melted too much or it will run and may fall into the eye.

The Cheeks—It is already apparent that character and age are suggested not alone by lines but by shadows as well. This is particularly true on the make-up of the cheeks. Sunken cheeks are made either with gray powder or gray paint. The conventional sunken cheek is made by applying a



MAKING UP THE NOSE

a-WITHOUT MAKE-UP b-NOSE LENGTHENED
c-NOSE "PUGGED" d-MADE UP FOR OLD AGE

triangular patch of gray to the cheek, one line of the triangle being just below the cheek bone. The cheek bone may be raised and emphasized by placing a high-light near the outside corner of the eye with a short dark line beneath it which is blended into the hollow. From the actor's observation he will discover the varieties of hollows on cheeks and can experiment with these effects on his own face.

The rouge on the cheeks is usually higher up on a man's face than on a woman's. With age, the rouge retreats from the eyes and is more "blotchy," more irregular in shape. Rouge placed close to the nose tends to narrow the face; placed farther out, tends to widen it. An alcoholic addict sometimes has a blotch of red on the cheek bones.

The cheeks may be made full by placing a small wad of cotton or a thin slice of apple inside each cheek. This gives the desired effect and does not interfere greatly with speech, but the practice is not recommended.

The Nose—Although the nose is not expressive, it is a prominent feature, and since its shape, size, and length can be readily changed, its make-up should not be neglected.

The nose can be lengthened by a white or light flesh line extending along the ridge to the tip, accentuated by shadows upon each side; it can be



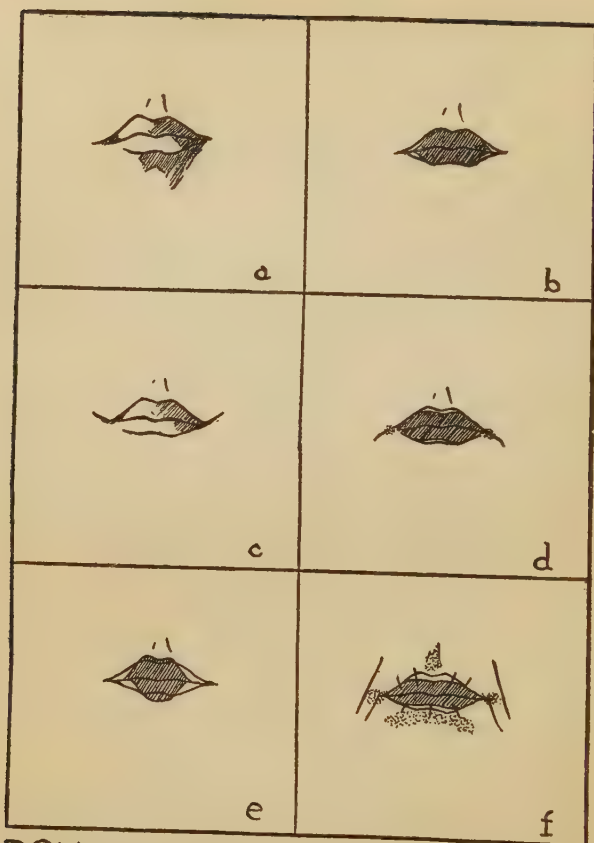
CHANGING THE PROFILE
THROUGH THE USE OF NOSE PUTTY

made to appear crooked by bending the white line and shading close to the line as before; it can be shortened or "pugged" by drawing a shadow line horizontally across the nose, shading the portion above it and high-lighting the tip; or it can be modelled into any shape desired through the use of nose putty.

When using nose putty, a portion is broken off and heated or kneaded with the fingers until it becomes pliable. All grease paint and cream are removed from the nose. The putty is then applied to the nose where it will adhere to the skin without danger of coming off. The nose can now be built out, widened, or lengthened, and the edges smoothed down where the putty joins the skin. When the modelling is complete, the putty is painted with ground color. After the performance it can be pulled off and worked over for another performance.

Nose putty can be put to other uses such as building out the chin, making warts, and heightening the cheek bones.

The Lips—We have explained, under the subject of straight make-up, how the shape and size of the lips are changed. Lips are very expressive. Thick lips express grossness and sensuality; straight lips sternness and coldness; lips that turn upward, a happy disposition; those that turn



ROUGING AND LINING THE LIPS

a-WITHOUT MAKE-UP b-STRAIGHT. c-HAPPINESS

d-SADNESS e-ORIENTAL f- OLD AGE

downward, sorrow or cynicism; colorless lips, age or illness.

Thick lips are produced by rouging beyond the natural lip lines. The effect may be heightened by high-lighting below the lower lip and shading below that. Thin lips are made by covering portions of the lips with ground color; straight lips, by flattening out the cupid's bow; lips expressing happiness, by a shadow line curving upward from each corner of the mouth; illness by painting the lips gray or flesh color; extreme age by graying the lips and drawing dark gray or brown lines vertically across the lips and an eighth of an inch beyond. The lower lip may be made to protrude by placing a heavy shadow under the lip. The mouth may be widened by extending a straight line outward from the corners of the mouth.

The Lower Face—Age, dissipation, illness, or worry soon bring lines to that portion of the face extending from the nose to the mouth corners and beyond. As these hollows and wrinkles approach the vertical in direction, they give the face a pinched, narrow look; as they curve outward from the nose, they widen the face and give it a contented appearance. The direction, size, and number of these lines vary greatly. Here again the

actor should study faces before he attempts any variance from the conventional.

The chin can be sharpened and emphasized by a patch of light flesh tone, or it can be built out with putty. A dimple can be made by drawing a thin line, a quarter of an inch in length, upon the chin.

The jaw line can be sharpened by a dark gray line with a shadow beneath it; or, it may be softened by a light flesh color and a suggestion of high-lighting.

The Neck—The neck can be given lines in the same manner as the forehead. A suggestion of a fat neck can be given by the use of horizontal gray lines with high-lights; of a skinny neck by wide gray lines diagonally downward with soft high-lights upon the throat tendons. We know how the tendons become more pronounced in old age; therefore, with increasing age the tendons may be high-lighted and lined and shadowed with dark gray. Veins can be painted on the neck. Neck hollows can be made with grease paint or powder. The necklace of bones, sometimes visible on a thin person, can be made less noticeable by rouging the prominences and applying a light ground color to the hollows.

Other Features—We have already suggested

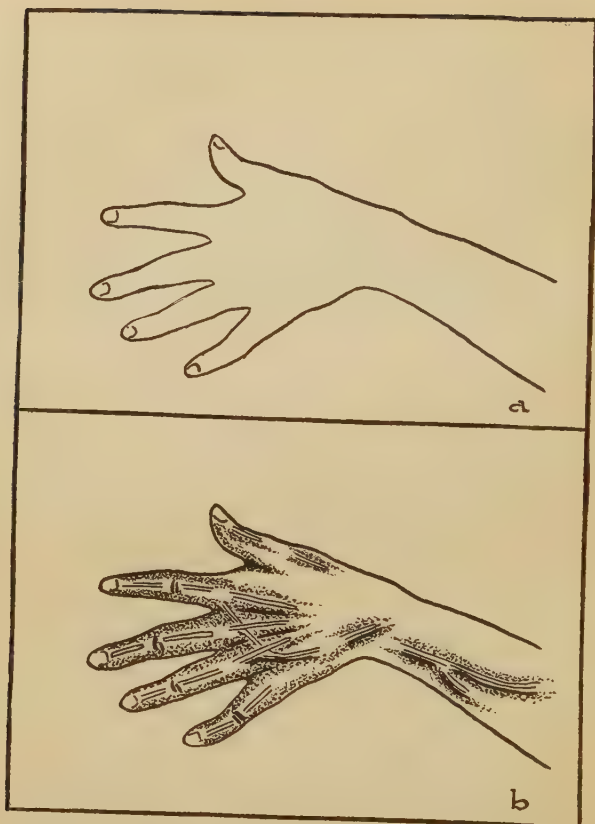
that the lobe of the ear may be tinted. Nose putty can be used, in moderation, for remodelling the ears. A piece of putty, placed behind the ear, will push it forward.

The effect of missing teeth can be secured in several ways. There is a preparation called Email Noir which can be applied to the teeth; court plaster can be used if the character is on the stage only a short time, or the teeth, after having been dried, can be painted with black grease paint.

Arms and Hands—The amateur frequently appears on the stage with an adequate facial make-up, but with his arms and hands in their natural state. The hands are expressive and are watched by the audience. They should not be neglected in the matter of make-up.

If the arms are bared, they should be painted either with liquid color or grease paint, usually of a shade darker than the paint used on the face. Veins can be painted with a gray or blue liner, and shadowed with brown lines. An arm can be made to appear emaciated by graying the arm where the hollows naturally would come, and high-lighting the positions of the bones and tendons.

An illusion of thin hands can be given by high-lighting the finger ridges and the bones on the back of the hand, and shading the flesh between the fingers and on the back of the hand between



MAKING UP THE HANDS AND
ARMS: a-WITHOUT MAKE-UP b-POSIT
IONS OF LINES, SHADOWS & HIGH-LIGHTS FOR AGE

the bones. The knuckles can be made to stand out with shadows and high-lights. The fingers can be made to appear longer by shading the skin between the fingers, carrying the shadows well back on the hands. False nails, made of stiff paper, can be pasted on the natural nails.

The Hair—No better advice can be given about wigs than never to use them unless they are absolutely necessary. This advice applies especially to men whose wigs, when ordered from a costume house, often look like wigs and not like natural hair. The next best advice is to have a wig made to order; but most amateurs cannot afford to own their wigs, and this advice is without much value.

The actor should remember that many effects can be obtained through the dressing of his own hair,—especially if he is willing to forego having it cut for a week or so past his customary time. The hair may be plastered down, or ruffed up, or parted in the middle, or curled. A change in hair dressing sometimes brings a surprising transformation.

The hair may also be powdered with corn starch or colored with Mascaro with no harm resulting, though with some inconvenience.

However, it is sometimes necessary to use a wig; and fortunately, good wigs are obtainable from many of the reliable costume houses.

The natural (and in this instance the correct) way of putting on a wig is to fit it first to the forehead and then pull it back over the head. The natural way of removing a wig is not the correct way. We should never push it up from the front, but should draw it up by the hair from behind. If the wig is loose, or if there seems danger of its coming off during the play, it may be made to set tight to the head by first tying a band of tape around the head and then pinning the wig to the band with small hairpins.

If the wig is too large, a small pleat can be taken in it back of the ears, or at the back of the wig just over the elastic band; if it stands out from the face, it can be adjusted with invisible hairpins, or by a small pleat near the temples, or by sticking it to the face with spirit gum. Sometimes with the aid of the head band and careful pinning a slight looseness can be deftly disposed of.

When using a bald wig or a wig with a high hair line, the actor sometimes has difficulty in blending the wig and the forehead and in getting rid of the wig line. The wig line must fit snugly across the forehead, otherwise it will always show. The cloth part of the wig can be painted and blended when the forehead is being made up.

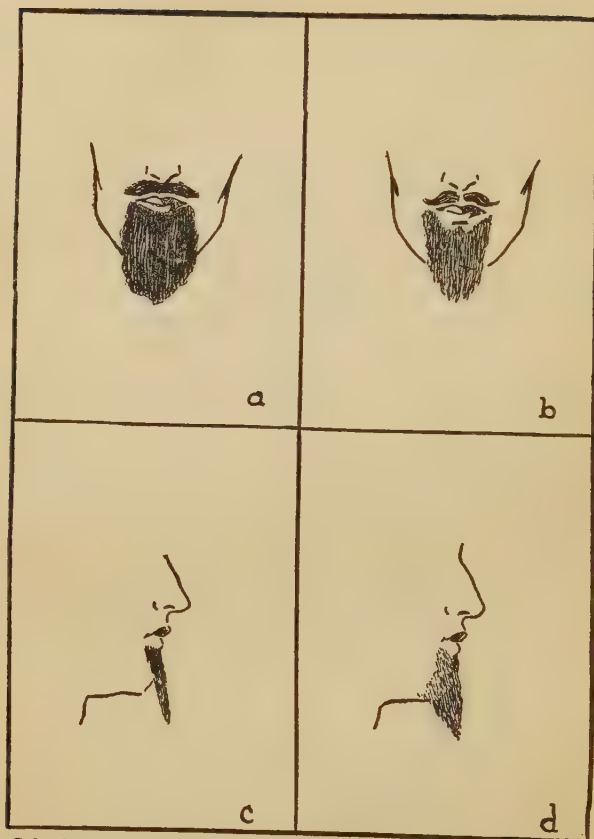
A good wig can be combed, brushed and arranged as if it were the actor's own hair. But wigs

should not be painted or powdered; for while a desirable effect may be obtained in this way, the powder and paint are very bad for the wigs.

Beards—We have already given several suggestions about beards. The most desirable kind of beard or moustache is the one on gauze. It may be stuck on with spirit gum and trimmed to suit. The use of gauze beards is limited, however, and crêpe hair is sometimes necessary.

If crêpe hair is used, the strand should first be loosened and several inches cut off. The piece should be combed out with a coarse-toothed comb. The hair is then applied to the face in sections. A little goes a long way; a few inches from the strand is sufficient for a full beard and moustache. Before the beard is put on, the portions of the face to be covered must be dry and free from grease paint. Cold cream is usually all that is necessary for removing the beards; alcohol, however, is better.

The beginner frequently uses too much hair and makes a thick, unnatural beard. He also sticks the hair too close to the under lip. Often he sticks the hair to the vertical part of the chin but neglects the under part, so that the beard in profile is unnatural and too thin. The moustache should be put on in two pieces and not pasted straight across the upper lip.



CREPE HAIR BEARDS: a-BEARD TOO THICK; TOO CLOSE TO LIPS b-BETTER BEARD c-HAIR DOES NOT EXTEND UNDER CHIN, BAD IN PROFILE d-HAIR EXTENDING FROM UNDER CHIN, THINNED AT EDGES

It is difficult to describe the process of making beards; success comes only with experimentation.

(E) MAKING UP SPECIFIC CHARACTERS

Although the facial characteristics of the individual actor prevent any description of a specific make-up from being wholly reliable, we shall attempt to describe the make-up of two definite characters.

For our first example, let us take the character of Timson in Galsworthy's *The Pigeon*. Timson is a cabby—a disreputable creature, weather-beaten, dissipated, and furrowed. This character requires a wig of scraggly, iron gray hair. Having selected as a ground color a ruddy old age, we adjust the wig to the head and begin applying the ground color and blending the line across the forepart of the wig. The color as it approaches this line should be lighter in shade, probably natural flesh. The wig should be high enough on the forehead so that when the forehead is wrinkled, it will not move the wig. The paint across the wig line should be thick. With a little patience we will find that the line can be painted out and the forepart of the wig and the forehead can be blended together.

We have only painted the upper part of the face, because it is necessary to increase the size of

the nose with nose putty. The putty is cut and kneaded and a wide, thick nose is modelled over the natural nose. When the edges have been smoothed out where they meet the skin, the rest of the face and neck are covered with a thin coating of ground color.

Since Timson is an alcoholic addict, we give him a touch of rouge high up on the cheek bones, and also redden his nose a bit; but we must not rouge his nose too heavily or we will make him a farce character. We brush the eyebrows forward and downward, placing a smudge of white in the center of each. We add several deep wrinkles to the forehead. We hollow the eyes with dark gray or brown. We take expression away from the eyes by graying the eyelids, and we give them a watery look by drawing a soft red line above and below. We give him the usual crow's feet, running the lines downward rather than horizontal. We paint a bag under each eye (as before described) with a smudge in the center of each bag.

A line is drawn downward and outward from each side of the nose. It is blended until it becomes a shadow, then another line is drawn down its center. The line and shadow are given a high-light on the cheek side. A shadow is placed between the nose and the upper lip. The lips are then painted out with ground color; they are closed tightly and a thin, dark line, curving downward towards the

corners, is drawn along the lips. Gray or brown lines are extended outward and downward from the mouth corners, and are continued in a curve towards the jaw lines as shadows, faintly highlighted. This is to bag the cheeks. The suggestion of heavy cheeks is aided by the obliteration, with light flesh colors, of the jaw line. The lower lip is made to obtrude by a heavy shadow beneath it.

Our make-up has kept Timson's face dissipated and old, but heavy and rugged. To bring out the heaviness still more, we thin and hollow the neck. The hands are reddened, the knuckles made prominent, and the veins lined. Face, neck, and hands are then powdered with a brunet powder, and the make-up is complete.

We next select the Country Woman in the one-act play *Will-o'-the-Wisp*. The author describes the character as "an old and withered dame." We know from reading the play that she has lived a hard life, is superstitious and lonely, and belongs to no particular nationality. In our make-up we must be careful not to make her a hag, for she is, after all, a rather pleasant, sympathetic old creature.

Her hair (or her gray-streaked wig) we brush straight back and bind in a simple knot. We use sallow old age for ground color. We hollow her eyes, especially the inner corners, hollow her cheeks, giving her the conventional triangle, paint

in shadows and lines from the sides of her nose almost straight down towards the corners of her mouth, and shadow her lower lip. We may highlight faintly her cheek bones, chin, and the upper portion of her forehead. The forehead is lined and the furrows drawn between the eyebrows. The eyebrows are curved downward and outward with light brown or gray. We give her a few crow's feet, slanting the lines downward. A thin, dark line is drawn under the eyes. The corners of the mouth are turned down slightly. Most of the color is removed from her lips. Instead of blotting out the jaw line, we accentuate it with a brown or gray line which does not stop abruptly at either end, but is blended into the ground color at the chin and below the ears. We give her neck a hollow, and lines and high-lights to suggest the tendons. We thin her hands in the manner described previously.

If she is using her natural hair, we gray it in streaks with corn starch. Then we powder her face, hands, and neck with a light powder.

We have selected simple problems in make-up. The actress may continue her experimentation with Ruth Honeywill, Mrs. Smith, or Mrs. Midget; or, if she wishes more difficult problems, let her practice on the changes in make-up involved in the characterization of Miss Kite in *The Passing of the Third Floor Back*, or with the make-up of Mrs. Crespigny in Fitch's *The Truth*. The ac-

tor may work on Ferrand in *The Pigeon* or Daoud in *If*; or, he may test his ability on Baron Chevril, the aging roué in *A Parisian Romance*, Robert Cokeson in Galsworthy's *Justice*, and He in Andreyev's *He Who Gets Slapped*. Such suggestions are unnecessary. The actor will find a multitude of make-up problems awaiting him in the characters of modern drama.

CHAPTER IX

THE ACTOR AND HIS CO-WORKERS

It is more than possible that we have created a false impression regarding the importance of the actor. We may have seemed to suggest that he is the most important individual working in the theatre and hence all should make way for him; we may have drawn him as an intelligent, well-equipped, sensitive figure engaged in a task which in complexities and difficulties is above all others in significance in the theatre.

Because we have been silent on the work of the other theatre workers, the actor should not for a moment infer that he is of such outstanding importance. The author, the director, the art or technical director, his fellow actors, all share in the creation of the acted play. The individual actor is only one of a group. He has his important place but the others have their important places also.

Let the actor keep in mind that the director is more than a coach. He has moved to a position in which he supervises and correlates the work of many artists and workers, building their individual contributions into an artistic and dramatic unit.

He, more than anyone else, is responsible for the play.

Although the director has charge of the entire production, neither he nor the actor should look upon the relationship as that of overlord and subject. Here are two equally necessary theatre workers, each of whom, because of his contribution, commands the respect of the other. In order to make the contribution of each more effective, the director assumes, in the process of building the play into a dramatic unit, the rôle of master.

During the rehearsal period the actor should recognize the director's position. Let us emphasize what we said in an earlier chapter: the director's word must rule; whether or not the actor likes it, he must submit to direction; one mind and only one must be in charge if the play is to be built up into a dramatic and artistic unit. That the actor and director do not agree on certain points, is irrelevant to the situation. The director sees the play as a whole, he knows what he wants, and the actor should try to give it to him.

Only when the actor has studied the entire play, only when he understands each character and sees the play from every angle of its production,—only then is he justified in challenging the words of the director. In nearly every instance the director knows more about the production of the play than the actor; in nearly every instance he takes a more

comprehensive view than the actor. No properly trained amateur ever argues with his director. He knows better. He may question, he can suggest; but he will not attempt to dictate.

The director has a difficult task to perform. It is a part of the actor's business to consider how he can be of help to him. He can help most of all by taking the responsibility for his own part, which is rightfully his own job, and making all the preparation he is able to make on the part. Here and there throughout the book we have referred to this responsibility. Before a part is assigned to him, the actor should have made what preparation he could in having his tools in condition. When the part is given him, he should not wait for the director to push and pound him into the character; he should set to work on it himself, comprehending it, making it real, interpreting it according to the director's instructions; he should memorize his lines on time; he should experiment with voice and gestures for his character; in brief, he should work on his interpretation in every way he can. Let him be assured that his director will be happily surprised at this preparatory work, and will be deeply appreciative of it.

The actor can also be of help by never having to be told the same thing over and over. If he does not understand some explanation of the director, let him ask for it again and get it, once and for all.

When he is assigned certain stage positions and business, let him make a note of them. A director grows discouraged if he has to tell the actor: "No, you cross to the table on the *next* speech" rehearsal after rehearsal. The actor can be of real assistance if he pays attention to what the director tells him.

He can help by manifesting towards his work an attitude which is helpful. Does he realize the myriad things a director has to think about? the tasks that must be accomplished before the play is ready for presentation? the fact that though all others grow discouraged, the director cannot? A director will warm to an actor who is in sympathy with him in his task of production and enthusiastic over his own share in it.

He can help by setting some value upon his and his director's time during rehearsal period. Let him look at the period from the director's standpoint. It is not a time for memorizing lines, for wasting time, for argument. The rehearsal period does not belong to him but to the play.

He can help by holding the atmosphere of the play, by preserving the continuity, when the director finds it necessary to halt the scene in order to give instructions. During the interruption, the quiet attention of the actors *in character* aids the director and makes it easier for the cast to proceed after the interruption.

We can make this general statement about as-

sisting the director: the actor is likely to receive help from the director in proportion to the help he gives the director by accepting responsibility and doing the work which is rightfully his own.

On the other hand, we must not overlook the fact that the director can be of greater or less service to the actor. He will be of greatest service if he has learned something about acting through experience so that he can understand and sympathize with his actors, so that his directions are always reasonable and can be carried out, so that he can sense his actor's mood and knew when to insist or be lenient, when to use tact or bluntness, when to move rapidly or slowly.

The director can also help if he does not assume an attitude of great superiority, for an actor does not his best work under a despotic or a condescending master. He can help by being clear and reasonable in his directions: by telling the actor not only what to do but why it is to be done. If he tells an actor to do a certain thing, the actor should not have to obey him blindly with no understanding of the reason, the motivation back of the movement.

Here, then, are two important theatre workers who can and should be mutually helpful.

There is also the question of the relationship which should exist between the actor and his fellow actors. The advice we have to offer is not new. The

actor has found it in this book before now. But we feel justified in repeating it until he acts upon it.

He should not look upon the cast as individuals each with a separate task to perform, but as members of a team, which, in order to win, must use concentrated effort and coöperation. The actor should think of himself as a member of that team. If he is given the ball to carry, he needs the other's help as interference; if he is to receive a forward pass, he must be in the proper place to receive it, and his team-mates must help him get there. On the other hand, when someone else runs with the ball, he helps as interference; when someone else signals for the right to catch the ball, he does not run in and take the catch away from him. If the same spirit were present among a cast of actors before and during a performance which is present among the members of a football team before and during a game, we would have more unified, more dramatic productions.

A number of questions which concern this relationship of actor and director disappear when the actor puts this theory of team work into practice. For instance, he will not permit himself to think of parts in such terms as "leading parts" and "minor parts." If he is playing a character that speaks many lines, he will not look down upon the butler in the play because the butler has only

two or three lines to say. He may have thirty or forty speeches in the scene; the other may have only the one line: "Sir James has gone. He—he has disappeared!" But this one line may be important. It is an integral part of the play. The play would rise if a great actor entered as the butler and spoke the line. The play will rise if an amateur enters and does the bit effectively rather than badly.

Looking at it from the standpoint of this second actor, the person playing the butler should not think of his part as insignificant, as requiring no work and effort. He, too, is a member of the team. It is the team as a unit and not just one or two members which is doing the job. Let him make the best contribution he can towards winning.

If he believes in the principle of team work, the actor knows that he owes it to the other members of his cast to memorize his lines promptly and to be on time at rehearsals. An actor who has his lines and his character can make very little progress in a rehearsal if he has to act with a person whose head is buried in a copy of the play; he needs, he must have the reaction which the other is to give him. If one actor out of a cast of ten appears at rehearsal only ten minutes late, he has cheated the other nine actors out of an hour and a half of rehearsal time.

Again, he will hold the atmosphere of the play

when the director interrupts. This interested attention is often helpful to those who are struggling with a hard scene, or to one whose character eludes him.

Lastly, as a member of the team, he will render his fellow actors any little service he can. He will supply an expression, a movement, a bit of motivation which will make another's speech more reasonable. He will give him the reaction he needs for building up the part dramatically. If the line, the dramatic movement, the climax belongs to another, he will contribute towards the effect so that it will go to the other and will not divert interest to himself.

One more way in which the actor can help himself and his fellows is by always thinking of the other actors, not as themselves, but as the characters they are portraying. From the moment the parts are assigned, he does not address the actors by their real names but by the names of the characters they are to portray. This may seem to be a bit ridiculous at first, but a little thought will lead us to see that such an attitude tends to intensify the reality of the play, tends to dissipate the ordinary, every day connections with the characters in the play, and aids in breaking down self-consciousness in himself and others during the early rehearsals.

The actor does not come into such close contact

with the art or technical director as he does with the director and his fellow actors. The relationship which exists between the two is not so important. The two naturally go their own ways, neither troubling himself very much about the work of the other. This attitude is rather unfortunate for both. Each would be more considerate of the other, and would have greater respect for his difficulties and accomplishments, if he understood the other's work.

As we tried to make clear in the section on problems arising from stagecraft, there are times when the work of these two people may come to clash. When the author has delegated the revelation of the drama to the actor, when the actor is the center of interest, when he has to do certain things or be in certain definite places on the stage, then the art director should help him by having his scenery, properties, and lights so arranged that the actor's work may be easily carried out. The art director does not, of course, consult the actor but works with the director on these problems.

On the other hand, in matters which concern the artist's side of the production, it is the actor's business to be governed by the art director. We might mention the subject of costumes as an example. Occasionally an actor does not like his costume: he objects to its color, its design, he does not think it will look well on him. In this situation,

the art director should be master and the actor should abide by his decision.

The playwright makes a most important contribution to the production, and it goes without saying that the actor should respect him enough to give care to the task the playwright has assigned him. We must admit, though, that this respect is sometimes impossible. Some plays are badly written, some characters are inconsistently drawn. In cheap, poorly constructed plays, an intelligent, sensitive actor finds it very difficult to retain any respect for the author and his play.

The actor's relationship with his audience is partly discussed under the section devoted to the theatrical sense; beyond what we have said, we can only advise that the actor discover more about this relationship through experience.

Lastly, we would say a word for the stage crew. There is no need for the actor to assume a superior air towards these men. They, too, are members of the team.

Within the theatre is a group of workers, each chosen because of his individual talents and qualities. Together they should strive towards the same end: the best presentation possible. In the scheme of production each has his share; in the scheme each has his importance. Only through coöperation can their individual efforts reach their highest dramatic effectiveness.

CHAPTER X

BACKGROUNDS

IF we could make an examination of a mythical person who would represent the average amateur applicant for acting honors, the result of the examination, we fear, would not be altogether flattering to the applicant. He would have his good points, to be sure. He would, perhaps, be a healthy, handsome youth, egotistical but likable, and willing to be sincere, if sincerity were necessary; his voice would be neither good nor bad, his body sufficiently trained for a beginner; we might discover a glimmer of personality and an inadequate, undeveloped theatrical sense. He would disappoint us in imagination and sensitiveness, and intellectually he would fall far below the standard we set for him. His lack of knowledge, his lack of intellectual interest would be his most outstanding deficiency.

We would not condemn the amateur group with the indictment of "no brains"; we only state that of those wanting to act and trying to act in our amateur and non-professional theatre, the major-

ity are deficient in the general intellectual background which persons of their age and opportunities should possess; and more surprising still, they are ignorant of knowledge of the theatre and its arts.

Why is this true? Probably the reason is found in the fascinating but false conception of the stage which most of us at one time possess. This conception makes of stage work a romantic occupation, free from hard work, free from unhappiness; it shows us a group of gifted people called actors, who win applause and renown through the occasional use of their histrionic talents, and who lead, withal, a very gay and joyous existence.

Hard work and mental effort find no place in this conception. Acting appeals to many young people who have not the intelligence or the power of application necessary to pass them in their school work; and believing that they possess the gift for acting, and thinking that there is nothing difficult in stage work, they feel that their future must lie in acting. Even the intelligent actor candidate rarely associates intellectual background, breadth of social perspective, and mental effort in general, with acting. Time after time the present writers have seen these sincere amateurs suddenly realize, after several years of acting, the need for knowing many things which they never dreamed were important when they began to act.

If this book has been convincing on one point, surely that one point is that *somebody* has to use his mind, *somebody* has to know a thing or two if the play is to be brought to life on the stage. Instinct and emotion are not enough; somebody has to do sound thinking and clear reasoning.

Why should an actor believe that he can be a better actor, or even as good an actor if he leaves all the thinking to his director? What does he hope to gain by remaining ignorant of the knowledge which is serviceable in production? If the actor is to make real progress, he must learn to think as well as feel. The fact that he is an actor does not excuse him from becoming educated.

We would not attempt to dictate to the beginning actor what his education should be; we would, however, call to his attention the intellectual, social, and theatrical backgrounds which affect his work; we would endeavor to show him that certain knowledge will make his work easier, more pleasant, more certain of results.

(A) THE INTELLECTUAL BACKGROUND

We venture the general assertion that little knowledge leads to unintelligent interpretation, wide knowledge to intelligent interpretation.

The actor should have a knowledge of literature, since he builds his character from the literature of

the printed play. In every case, be the play ancient or modern, first-rate or fifth-rate, he is dealing with the stuff of literature, and frequently with literature itself. It is depressing to listen to an actor who, insensible to writing, unappreciative of literature, attempts to interpret a play which is full of the beauty and truth and power of literature. He is as ridiculous as the small town choir singer essaying the interpretation of a rôle in grand opera. An actor should have a knowledge of the great writers; he should come to know and appreciate their writings.

The actor will find pleasure and reward awaiting him in the classic dramatists. The Greeks offer him three: Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. These old poets are recommended without apology. A sensitive actor cannot read the character of Cassandra in Æschylus' *Agamemnon*, the story of Ædipus in Sophocles' *Ædipus Rex*, the speech of Andromache spoken just before her son, Astyanax, is led away to be killed in Euripides' *Trojan Women*, without some æsthetic pleasure, without increasing his respect for Greek drama, without widening his dramatic perspective. Spain gives him two interesting writers in Lope de Vega and Calderon; France three in Corneille, Racine, and Molière. Especially should the actor know his Molière, not only because of Molière's great influence on comedy throughout the past two hundred fifty

years, but for the sheer pleasure to be derived from reading his plays. Three writers stand out in Germany's "age of genius": Lessing, Goëthe, and Schiller. Of these, the actor will find Lessing the least ponderous and involved, the most human and readable. Then there is the Elizabethan period in England! An actor should almost feel a duty towards Shakespere and his less great but highly significant contemporaries. So much of our dramatic technique, so much of our theatrical tradition go back to the days of these giants. The actor simply cannot remain in ignorance of Shakespere, our finest dramatic poet. How much he gives us of the pleasure of literature! How much he has to show us about dramatic writing! How much he can teach us about acting! In addition to Shakespere's plays there are the comedies of Dekker, Middleton, and Jonson, the tragedies of Marlowe, Ford, and Webster to increase the actor's pleasure, and deepen his pride in his work of acting.

Nor should he neglect the modern dramatists. These men focus and direct thought on all manner of subjects which are vital to modern life; they give us social criticism and philosophy, local color and character revelation, sermons and satires and fantasies; and they are not neglectful of the fact that drama may be literature. There is Hauptmann with his poetic, elusive allegory in *The*

Sunken Bell, and his powerful handling of a naturalistic theme in *Drayman Henschel*; there is the naturalistic, sympathetic study of a Russian family in Tchekov's *The Cherry Orchard*; the satiric, symbolic, romantic *Chanticleer* and the poetic, swash-buckling, wholly delightful *Cyrano de Bergerac* of Rostand; there is the discussion of reality and unreality, "the dramatization of the artistic process itself" in Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, Shaw's perfect comedy, *Candida*, O'Neill's dramatically powerful, thought compelling study of modern civilization in *The Hairy Ape*. A careful reading of Ibsen's plays will reveal to us all that we need to know about modern dramatic method from 1890 to 1910. We can find a series of plays beginning with Sudermann's study in *Magda* (1893) and extending down to the present, which show to us a changing code of morals as they affect woman, which reveal woman's growing freedom in matters of morality. And there is Synge's delightful comedy *The Playboy of the Western World*, Lady Gregory's charming little plays of Irish life, Galsworthy's dramas of unrest, Barrie's whimsical comedies, the preachments of Brieux, the delightful character study of Mary Whichello in Jones' *Mary Goes First*, Maeterlinck's fairy-like *Blue Bird*. Modern drama offers richness and

variety. It is rich in color, power, literary qualities, in its variety of subject matter and in the pleasures which it offers the reader.

The actor, in his reading of literature, does not stop with the reading of drama; he takes up the lyric and dramatic poets as well. The poet is sensitive to the spoken word, even as the actor should be. As the actor begins to appreciate poetry, he carries this appreciation into his audible acting, he applies it to his handling of speech. He trains himself, unconsciously perhaps, in sensitiveness to rhythm and to light and shade. He finds that reading poetry aloud improves his diction. The reading of poetry contributes to the general culture and æsthetic appreciation of the actor and at the same time has a practical significance. The actor recognizes that a knowledge of literature, with its attendant cultural and artistic aspects, with its practical application to his own work, is valuable to him.

Literature, however, is not the only source of knowledge which is useful to the actor. If a student were permitted to study one branch of knowledge and only one, we would recommend that he give his attention to history. A knowledge of history is a great help to the actor in interpreting, not only historical plays, but modern plays; for his modern play is an analysis of human life and human institutions which have their roots far back in his-

tory. More than this, the actor finds history crowded with interesting character studies; he finds that a knowledge of history widens his outlook, it sets things in their proper places, it tends to rationalize his opinions concerning any period of human history, because from historical knowledge he can set the period in its place in the natural evolution of society.

There is also value in the study of economic and political problems. Much of our present day drama emphasizes man set against an undesirable social or political background, or the social and political institutions themselves, which deter man from progress. How can the actor appreciate Galsworthy if he does not possess some knowledge of these things? How can he get the full meaning of Brieux or Hauptmann?

Lastly, we would recommend that the actor increase his knowledge of the arts. His dream should be of some day growing into an artist, and an artist should not narrow his interest to his own art. The actor especially should not so narrow his interest, for on the stage many of the arts may unite and create a new art form in the acted play. He is one of a group of coöperating, creative artists. Design and color, music and poetry, elocution and the dance, all may contribute towards this new creation. In order to make his own contribution more intelligent and important, the actor

should not limit his knowledge to his own art. He can learn about visible acting from pictures, about movement and posture from the dance, about audible acting from poetry and music.

Beyond the pleasure he finds in his own cultural development, beyond the finer equipment he will be able to bring to his work, is the effect he will have on his audience through his increased knowledge and understanding. Intellectual shallowness cannot be hid under a bushel! Like calls unto like. An intelligent actor is recognized by an intelligent audience, and is appreciated.

(B) THE SOCIAL BACKGROUND

We have made several references to the actors who see their characters only on the stage, who never take them to life for verification. Such actors are found in every acting group. Is not one important reason for their failure due to the fact that the theatre tends to become a little world, shut off from all outside life, so that its actors are in danger of living wholly within the theatre and of doing their work in terms of "theatre?" Because of this fact, they subject their acting to the test of tradition or convention, they use the methods and tricks of others who, they are told, have been effective actors.

The actor needs to create for himself a wider

social background. Life, not the stage, should provide the background. He should come close to life, he should study it, make human contacts, develop human understanding and human sympathy. His knowledge and appreciation of this life he wishes to interpret should be increased, not by an intensive study of the life as it has been interpreted upon the stage, but by contact with the life as it exists outside the theatre.

As this contact is made, the actor will tend to forget about tricks and tradition and will go more often to life itself for answers to his questions of interpretation. A broader social perspective will lead him away from the "theatrical" and towards the true and dramatic.

(C) THE THEATRICAL BACKGROUND

We have asserted our belief in the value of historical study. The history of the theatre should be a part of this study; no amateur who has a sound interest in acting will remain long in ignorance of theatre history.

The actor finds three subjects challenging his interest: drama itself, the stage, and the actor.

The material to be found in books and the courses on drama offered in schools and colleges make the subject of written drama the actor's easiest approach to a theatrical background for

the study and practice of acting. It will take him back to turbulent periods in the world's history, it will carry him to many countries, it will introduce him to some of the world's greatest geniuses; for the development of drama is always in close touch with the development of civilization and its culture.

In his reading he sees half-savage tribes of a long-gone age living their lives primitively in fear and in slaughter. He sees them form a circle and dance a victory dance in which are gesture, chant, and a monologue by the chief who narrates the bloody incidents of the encounter. He visualizes some of these tribes crossing the threshold of civilization and holding fast to this crude dramatic ceremony which has become a part of their life. Then he sees this worship or victory dance develop with their developing civilization. Words are added. The words are written down. And several centuries before the birth of Christ, on the vine-clad hills of Greece, in the temples of the Vedas in India, this ceremony takes on a literary form. It is still lyric, and he traces its growth to that great moment when *Æschylus* adds the second actor and changes drama from lyric to the dramatic. He is present at a Dionysian festival in the Athenian theatre when a tragedy of *Euripides*, full of the change and unrest of his age, is ap-

plauded by the radicals and disbelievers and howled down by the conservatives.

He goes to Rome. There sincere writers, inspired by the art of the Greeks, try to raise their own work to a high level, but the theatre is almost empty and those who come are rough and stubborn and noisy. The writers seek to write down to the level of this audience of soldiers, this audience which likes to see real blood shed in the Coliseum much better than blood shed in pretense in the theatre. Drama sinks lower and lower until literary quality disappears, art disappears, decency disappears.

While drama lies weak and impotent from its own maladies, he sees two foes advancing which are to bring about its death. The Christian church parodied and slandered in the Roman theatre, slowly rises to a position of authority and demands its extermination. But the theatre persists. The Church thunders and threatens. Blood is spilt. And in Constantinople on Good Friday the theatres are filled and the churches are empty. The priests harangue against the pagan dramatic art, but the hymns of the Church are given profane words and are sung by the actors. The warfare continues until the Church, aided by the Goths and Lombards in the West and the Saracens in the East, succeeds in wiping out all dramatic art.

A wave of barbarism inundates the western world. Art and learning perish. The Church alone lifts its head above the flood, and in the Church alone is there hope for a new civilization. It becomes the social, political, educational, spiritual center of life. And in the Church the reader sees drama, so long hated and reviled, reborn at the most sacred altar.

Several centuries after this rebirth, on a cold Christmas eve, he ascends to the white, towering cathedral. The church is filled. By the dim lights, scarcely penetrating the gloom, he sees the story of the birth of the Savior acted out by the priests and churchmen. There is the Star, there are the shepherds, and the Christ Child in the arms of the Virgin. From the choir come the voices singing the glad tidings. At the eastern door appear the Three Wise Men, bearing gifts. The congregation is awed and worshipful; they have combined seeing a play with going on a religious pilgrimage.

He is in Germany during the latter part of the fifteenth century. It is Eastertide and again a religious play is being performed, though not in the church now. He is shocked by what he witnesses. The Marys are on their way to the tomb to anoint the body of the crucified Christ. The scene is played for comedy! The women have no ointment, and a quack doctor, from Paris, sells them something worthless. Perhaps he finds more comedy

inserted in the tragic story. Perhaps he witnesses a comic race to the tomb with the disciples as comedians. What a change from the play he witnessed in the cathedral!

He follows the course of medieval drama until, under the tremendous impetus of the Renaissance and Reformation, it begins putting on its modern dress. Drama becomes free! It possesses now both a model and a goal! There is a lively hubbub on the Bankside in London. Makeshift theatres are springing up. Artists and hackwriters are writing plays.

For a moment his eyes turn eastward, and while the first theatre is being erected in London, he sees in Japan, a priestess fleeing with her lover to Tokyo where she organizes the first people's theatre in Japan.

London, Paris, Madrid become theatre centers. National drama develops. It is abreast of the times; it is a powerful influence. England, France, Spain, Germany,—each boasts its age of dramatic genius. . . .

So the actor continues until he brings the romantic, adventurous story down to his own day.

He finds an equally interesting study in the stage. The stage is always a conventional thing; it is always limiting and prescribing the technique of the dramatist; it is always making specific demands of the actor. A hundred questions arise:

What determines the shape, size, structure of the stage? Have the various stages grown up, in a haphazard fashion, from all sorts of undramatic beginnings? Has there been a continuous evolution of the stage? What relation has the inn yard stage of Shakespere to the dancing circle of the Greeks? Where did the proscenium come from? Why did the decoration of the stage change from the architectural to the pictorial?

These questions find answers as he reads the story of the stage. He sees it evolve from the dancing circle of the Dionysian celebration. The stage buildings appear, with their three doors or portals opening into the dancing space. Occasionally the roof of these buildings is used for acting. The chorus decreases in significance. The roof is used more and more for acting.

Theatre interest shifts to Rome where the stage buildings are lowered, the roof becomes definitely the stage, and the three (or five) portals are placed at the back of the new stage which is embellished with pillars, statues, and other architectural ornaments.

During the dark ages, the Roman stage is forgotten. When drama again appears, new stages are devised, stages which have their sources in the Church presentations. In France there is the wide, shallow stage with all of the places of action represented in a row of constructed "mansions" at

the back; in England a number of stage wagons bring scene after scene before the audience. But neither of these stages is of permanent interest. In the sixteenth century the Elizabethan stage is patterned on the improvised inn yard theatres. It, too, is not satisfactory for long.

Meanwhile, in Italy, a playhouse is erected on the old Roman model. Changes inevitably take place. The theatre is roofed over and artificial illumination becomes necessary. The middle portal is enlarged and enlarged again until it becomes the proscenium opening and the acting space, figuratively speaking, is pushed back behind it. Now scenery becomes necessary. A painted drop forms a background beyond the constructed houses on either side of the stage. This Renaissance theatre is introduced into France. It becomes popular and supersedes the medieval stages. After a time, painted wings appear. Gradually the architectural features are lost and the stage becomes definitely pictorial. And finally the evolution from the dancing circle of the Greeks to the Broadway playhouse of the twentieth century is complete.

And the reader learns other matters of interest. He discovers that the stage mechanic is not a modern innovation but is a theatre worker with more than two thousand years' experience. He sees the revolving stage, not as a modern invention, but as an adaptation of the old revolving stage of

Japan. He finds the idea of the present day "run-way" in the medieval Japanese "flower path." So, the stage is no longer a mystery to him, or a stranger; he has become acquainted with it, understands it, can criticize it intelligently.

Lastly, the amateur can vivify and humanize his theatrical background through a study of the actor.

The actor is the most picturesque, most fascinating figure in the theatre. Strong in body, imagination, humanity, and weak in will, he goes his colorful way through theatrical history, now honored and respected, now shunned and tormented, now a priest employed in the service of the gods, and again an outcast, a son of the devil denied all hope of Heaven. Now he takes his place beside the great poets, now he appears as a despised mountebank, possessing not a single redeeming virtue or talent. He is inspiring or tragic, puzzling or pathetic, but always he is interesting.

The reader is with him in Greece as, a respected, honored artist, he competes for the coveted actor's prize. He is with him in Rome where, despised, hooted, mistreated, he is stoned from the stage and lies dying while the crowd laughs at his agonies. He sees him turn comedy into dramatic silence while playing in a parody on Christian piety, as he wheels towards his audience and cries with intense sincerity: "*I—am a Christian!*" He walks

beside him as he travels the highways of Europe throughout the dark ages, endeavoring to bring some laughter to the people, some break in their monotony of life, through his poor exhibition of the dregs and by-products of the theatrical art. He sees him kneel at the sacred altar of the Church and receive once again his appointment of honored servant of God.

He visits the East and discovers the actor's noble position in Japan, his slavish position in China. He finds him in the Tibetan convents and the palaces of Java.

In the rooms of Gottsched, "the pope of German literature," he meets members of the German acting companies of the eighteenth century. He is present when they inspire the young Lessing to the writing of plays. He becomes acquainted with Caroline Neuber, Ekhof, and the great Schröder.

He visits Molière and his Palais Royal company, and is present at that tragic last performance of *Le Malade Imaginaire*.

He is with Mrs. Siddons in her hours of triumph on the London stage, and with Edmund Kean through his poverty and struggle until, after his memorable performance of Shylock, he is proclaimed a genius by the British public. . . .

Again we ask: will he be a worse actor because he has broadened his background? This contact with his theatre, this sympathetic understanding

which follows his study,—will they not bring him something of pleasure and pride? They may not make him a better actor but they will make him a more willing, a more sympathetic worker in the theatre.

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